

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION DRHJR80386-LG-525 (4/3)

Sponsors: Representatives Pate, Rapp, and Dickson (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ENACTMENT OF THE PASSENGER RAIL
2 INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007 (SENATE BILL 294) AND
3 OTHER PUBLIC PRIVATE INVESTMENTS IN RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE TO
4 BE CONSIDERED BY THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

5 Whereas, Senators Lott, Lautenberg, Burr, and others have introduced Senate
6 Bill 294, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2007, in the Congress
7 of the United States; and

8 Whereas, the legislation would reauthorize and reform Amtrak, provide for
9 enhanced accountability, reduce operating subsidies by forty percent, make
10 infrastructure investments which will improve both freight and passenger services,
11 create a new capital program totaling \$1.4 billion over six years for states to improve
12 and start new conventional and high-speed intercity passenger rail services, facilitate
13 competitive service provisions, set standards for on-time performance, and provide
14 remedies for chronic service delays; and

15 Whereas, the Congress will consider programs of tax credits that promote
16 investments in rail infrastructure to improve network capacity and reliability; and

17 Whereas, the North Carolina House Interim Committee on Expanding Rail
18 Service has reported to the North Carolina General Assembly that expansion of rail
19 freight and passenger services can help promote economic development and mobility
20 for our citizens; that improved freight and intermodal services can help integrate North
21 Carolina into the global economy; that the General Assembly should consider
22 mechanisms to join with local governments, the federal government, and the private
23 sector to provide funding for improved freight, intermodal, and passenger services; and

24 Whereas, Amtrak's national passenger rail system currently serves 16 cities
25 and towns in North Carolina with six daily trains, two in partnership with North
26 Carolina, providing safe, efficient, and affordable intercity mobility for hundreds of
27 thousands of North Carolinians annually; and

1 Whereas, North Carolina and its cities and towns have partnered for two
2 decades with Amtrak to provide its citizens with higher levels of service and continues
3 to do so; and

4 Whereas, the North Carolina General Assembly, acting in concert with the
5 Virginia General Assembly and pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 24101, has authorized creation
6 of the Virginia-North Carolina Interstate High Speed Rail Compact to develop
7 high-speed rail transportation in Virginia and North Carolina, advocate for development
8 of a federal funding partner, and provide State funds to support this development; and

9 Whereas, 16 chambers of commerce in six states, including those serving
10 Raleigh, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and Charlotte, have created the Southeastern
11 Economic Alliance to promote development of improved intercity and high-speed rail
12 services across the Southeastern United States; and

13 Whereas, the North Carolina Department of Transportation has analyzed and
14 recommended extension of passenger service to connect Western North Carolina via
15 Salisbury to Asheville and Southeastern North Carolina via Raleigh, Fayetteville, and
16 Goldsboro to Wilmington; and

17 Whereas, 27 cities, 30 towns and villages, 17 counties, 18 transportation
18 planning organizations and councils of government, 17 chambers of commerce, and 10
19 other State and local organizations have endorsed a resolution supporting creation of a
20 comprehensive passenger rail system to serve the State of North Carolina; and

21 Whereas, the Research Triangle, Triad, and Charlotte Metropolitan areas are
22 all developing plans for Regional Rail Transit Systems; and

23 Whereas, Charlotte-Mecklenburg has created a Metropolitan Transit
24 Commission and is currently utilizing local, State, federal, and private financing to
25 construct a multimodal five corridor rapid transit system and a new multimodal
26 Charlotte Gateway Station providing access to intercity and regional rail and bus
27 services; and

28 Whereas, the North Carolina Secretary's Rail Advisory Committee, acting
29 through the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Transportation, has asked
30 the United States Secretary of Transportation to provide for stability in our nation's
31 intercity passenger rail program and provide for a program of federal, State, and private
32 investment in our freight and passenger railroad system; and

33 Whereas, North Carolina has over 3,500 miles of railroad and is served by
34 two Class I and 24 short-line railroads; and

35 Whereas, the capacity of the rail network serving North Carolina is strained
36 which impacts our consumers, producers, shippers, communities, and citizens; and

37 Whereas, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation
38 Officials (AASHTO) in its Freight Rail Bottom Line Report recommended the Congress
39 an enhanced program of investment in the rail network; and

40 Whereas, North Carolina requires a predictable program of federal funding to
41 help implement these improvements to the rail freight and passenger network; and

42 Whereas, the Congress, through enactment of PL 109-59, SAFTEA-A Legacy
43 for Users (SAFETEA-LU) authorized a new title defining multiple programs that
44 promote public and private investment in rail infrastructure; and

1 Whereas, the Congress did not appropriate funds for these programs although
2 they would benefit numerous communities across North Carolina as well as corporate
3 and private citizens alike; and

4 Whereas, North Carolina has heretofore invested State funds in excess of
5 those required to match a program of federal funds; Now, therefore,

6 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

7 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly urges Congress to enact the Passenger
8 Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2007 (Senate Bill 294).

9 **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly endorses Public Law 109-59
10 (SAFETEA-LU) and urges Congress to appropriate funds to implement the rail
11 infrastructure investment programs authorized thereunder.

12 **SECTION 3.** The General Assembly supports federal-state and public
13 private investment in rail infrastructure and encourages Congress to enact such
14 legislation.

15 **SECTION 4.** The General Assembly encourages the North Carolina
16 delegation to the United States Congress to cosponsor this program of legislation and
17 work industriously for its enactment.

18 **SECTION 5.** The General Assembly encourages the railroad industry to
19 work cooperatively with State and local officials to achieve these public policy
20 objectives.

21 **SECTION 6.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.