

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

INTRODUCED BY E. HILL

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A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF WAYS TO IMPROVE PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE IN MONTANA, INCLUDING CREATION OF A MONTANA PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 65TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the North Coast Hiawatha ceased operation through southern Montana in 1979, and transportation to and from the major population centers of southern Montana would be greatly enhanced by passenger rail service; and

WHEREAS, increased passenger rail services will increase railroad-related employment because of the need for upgraded rail infrastructure and operating personnel; and

WHEREAS, tourism is Montana's second-largest industry and would be enhanced by improved passenger rail service; and

WHEREAS, the Empire Builder is one of the most popular long-distance passenger trains in the United States, and is greatly needed for the citizens of Montana's Hi-Line who have limited public transportation options, but is challenged by lack of rail capacity causing frequent delays; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no board or commission within the state of Montana that is charged with the sole responsibility of overseeing and advocating for passenger rail service.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to investigate ways to improve passenger rail service in Montana, including but not limited to the establishment of a passenger rail commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2016.



