



Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PASSENGER RAIL EXPANSION IN THE CENTRAL OHIO REGION.

WHEREAS, Ohio, with only three Amtrak routes -- two confined mostly to the northern edge of the state -- sees only 32 passenger trains crossing the state per week. It has far fewer intercity or regional passenger rail services than any of its neighbors except Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, Ohio, the nation's seventh-most populous state is only the 27th highest Amtrak ridership state and has the lowest ratio of Amtrak riders per resident of the top-10 most populous states, according to Amtrak; and

WHEREAS, among the top-10 most populous states near Ohio, Amtrak riders per 1,000 residents are 42 in Michigan, 186 in Illinois, 258 in Pennsylvania and 322 in New York compared to just 6 Amtrak riders per 1,000 residents in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, Ohio is the most populous state in the nation without any ongoing passenger rail development or operating program as it has no funds budgeted for passenger rail development in the currently proposed Ohio Department of Transportation biennial budget - making it the sixth such biennial budget in a row with no funding for passenger rail planning, development or operations; and

WHEREAS, Ohio, because of its legacy industrial status, has the fifth-most railroad industrial supplier employment in the nation according to the Ohio Department of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak reports that it spent \$40 million in 2019 on goods and services purchased from Ohio railroad industry suppliers, mostly for the provision and improvement of passenger rail services outside of Ohio meanwhile Amtrak in 2019 spent \$667 million on goods and services from suppliers in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia for an average of \$111 million for each of those six states; and

WHEREAS, at the end of 2019 Amtrak employed 32 people in Kentucky and West Virginia, 196 people in Michigan, 747 in Indiana, 1,284 in Illinois, 1,578 in New York and 2,700 in Pennsylvania but only 52 people earning wages of \$5.4 million in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, the employment multiplier for transportation sector jobs is 3.76 according to the Economic Policy Institute, meaning that for every Amtrak job added another 2.76 jobs are created among suppliers and in communities where employees live and work; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak proposes to increase the number of passenger trains in Ohio by 572 percent from 32 trains per week to 215 trains per week and the number of stations by 214 percent from seven existing to potentially 22 stations by 2035 suggests an approximate corollary increase in employment in Ohio from 52 to 300 permanent Amtrak jobs and 828 induced permanent jobs; and

WHEREAS, in Michigan, a Grand Valley University study found that the 22 Michigan communities

with Amtrak stations enjoyed \$62 million annually in traveler cost savings and local business benefits in 2009 - and that was before Amtrak ridership grew 60 percent in Michigan as a result of \$800 million worth of state-backed improvements to infrastructure and trains producing 110 mph speeds and better on-time performance; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak proposes to increase the number of weekly train arrivals and departures at Cincinnati from six to 104 trains per week, at Cleveland from 28 to 154 weekly, at Columbus and Dayton from zero to 42 per week, and at Toledo from 28 to 70 weekly; and

WHEREAS, safe, fast, modern, convenient passenger rail service offers time-savings and productivity benefits as business travelers can work and meet en route and all travelers can eat, drink or relax aboard an all-weather transportation mode, making Ohio a more attractive place to live and work, and to visit for business or pleasure; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2019 U.S. Department of Energy Data Book, travel by Amtrak train is 47 percent more energy efficient than traveling by car and 33 percent more energy efficient than domestic air travel. And pollution emissions have a directly correlation to energy efficiency, thus the more energy-efficient a travel mode is, the less pollution it emits; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Gahanna, Ohio hereby asks Ohio Senators to support a renewal of the five-year federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization in 2021 that includes Amtrak's proposed Corridors Development Program authorized at \$25 billion for capital improvements and \$300 million for operations over five years; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Gahanna, Ohio urges Ohio Senators to provide in the upcoming Transportation and Housing Urban Development appropriations bill \$5 billion for capital improvements and \$60 million for operations to fund Amtrak's Corridor Development Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, COUNTY OF FRANKLIN, STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That this Council does hereby support the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC) Rapid Speed Transportation Initiative, as set forth in EXHIBIT A.

Section 2. That this Council does hereby support expansion of passenger rail in the central Ohio region.

Section 3. That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect after passage by Council and on date of signature approval by the Mayor.