

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16

INTRODUCED BY T. FACEY

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A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON EXPANDING PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE IN MONTANA.

WHEREAS, commercial airline service to many counties and communities in Montana is inadequate and at risk of further reductions or elimination; and

WHEREAS, some communities in Montana are poorly served by public transportation, and passenger rail services provide mobility for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, students, and businesspeople; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak was created in 1971 from what remained of private passenger railroads and has been starved of investment and direction by the United States Congress and several presidential administrations; and

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, restoring the North Coast Hiawatha would stimulate Montana's economy through increased tourism spending and an associated increase in job opportunities; and

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

WHEREAS, the Empire Builder is a very popular long-distance passenger train in the United States, with over 90% on-time performance, and is greatly needed for the citizens of Montana's Hi-Line, who have limited public transportation options.

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:

- (1) evaluate the costs of expanding passenger rail service in Montana;
- (2) identify local, state, and federal funding sources for passenger rail;



