

1 SENATE MEMORIAL 3

2 **51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Peter Wirth

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9  
10 A MEMORIAL

11 RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF AMTRAK, THE NATIONAL RAILROAD  
12 PASSENGER CORPORATION, AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO NEW MEXICO'S  
13 ECONOMY; ACKNOWLEDGING THE THREAT TO VIABILITY OF THE SOUTHWEST  
14 CHIEF TRAIN; REQUESTING THAT THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL  
15 DELEGATION AND THE GOVERNOR SUPPORT THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF  
16 THE SOUTHWEST CHIEF.

17  
18 WHEREAS, Amtrak, the national railroad passenger  
19 corporation, a federally chartered corporation, provides train  
20 service to millions of Americans each year and operates two  
21 long-distance routes through New Mexico; and

22 WHEREAS, Amtrak's southwest chief train runs from Chicago  
23 to Los Angeles and stops in New Mexico at Raton, Las Vegas,  
24 Lamy, Albuquerque and Gallup; and

25 WHEREAS, the southwest chief carries passengers through

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1 scenic landscapes not visible from highways and provides an  
2 energy-efficient form of transportation; and

3 WHEREAS, many New Mexico residents who ride the southwest  
4 chief depend on it as the only form of public transportation  
5 between Raton and Albuquerque; and

6 WHEREAS, the southwest chief provides interstate  
7 transportation for New Mexico residents and travelers visiting  
8 New Mexico; and

9 WHEREAS, in federal fiscal year 2012, passengers boarded  
10 and alighted the southwest chief in New Mexico at Albuquerque,  
11 Lamy, Las Vegas and Raton more than one hundred twelve thousand  
12 times; and

13 WHEREAS, each year, about four thousand four hundred boy  
14 scouts who camp at the Philmont scout ranch travel on the  
15 southwest chief, using the Raton station; and

16 WHEREAS, the southwest chief's presence in the region  
17 enhances the state and local economies by attracting tourists  
18 and employing New Mexicans; and

19 WHEREAS, the southwest chief's presence in the region  
20 supports local businesses by requiring the purchase of goods  
21 and services; and

22 WHEREAS, many New Mexico counties, including Bernalillo,  
23 Colfax, Mora, San Miguel, Sandoval and Santa Fe, depend on  
24 property tax revenues paid by the BNSF railway; and

25 WHEREAS, since 1970, the New Mexico legislature and New

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1 Mexico business organizations, municipalities and counties have  
2 supported Amtrak; and

3 WHEREAS, the BNSF railway company, formerly the Burlington  
4 northern and Santa Fe railway company, owns and leases to  
5 Amtrak most of the line on which the southwest chief carries  
6 passengers in New Mexico; and

7 WHEREAS, capital funding is needed to modernize the  
8 southwest chief line running from Hutchinson, Kansas, to  
9 Albuquerque so that it meets required passenger-rail standards;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, the BNSF railway management has said that it will  
12 not renew Amtrak's lease, which expires in January 2014 unless  
13 Amtrak pays to upgrade that line; and

14 WHEREAS, the United States congress has not provided for a  
15 permanent funding stream to cover the costs of Amtrak's  
16 infrastructure needs; and

17 WHEREAS, Amtrak's inability to secure adequate capital  
18 funding for improvements imminently threatens the viability of  
19 the southwest chief line from Raton to Albuquerque; and

20 WHEREAS, the southwest chief coalition, a group of  
21 concerned citizens and elected officials from Colorado, Kansas  
22 and New Mexico, has assembled in an effort to preserve the  
23 southwest chief; and

24 WHEREAS, New Mexico governmental entities, including  
25 Colfax county, Mora county, San Miguel county, Santa Fe county,

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1 the city of Albuquerque, the city of Las Vegas, the city of  
2 Raton, the city of Santa Fe, the town of Wagon Mound and the  
3 New Mexico municipal league, have resolved to support the  
4 southwest chief coalition's efforts;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
6 OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico congressional delegation and  
7 the governor be called upon to support the continued viability  
8 of the southwest chief; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
10 transmitted to the members of the New Mexico congressional  
11 delegation; the governor; the New Mexico state transportation  
12 commission; the legislatures and the governors of the states of  
13 Colorado and Kansas; Amtrak; and the federal railroad  
14 administration.