

A MEMORIAL

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the southwest chief carries passengers through scenic landscapes not visible from highways and provides an energy-efficient form of transportation; and

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

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

WHEREAS, in federal fiscal year 2012, passengers boarded

and alighted the southwest chief in New Mexico at Albuquerque, Lamy, Las Vegas and Raton more than one hundred twelve thousand times; and

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, since 1970, the New Mexico legislature and New Mexico business organizations, municipalities and counties have supported Amtrak; and

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

WHEREAS, capital funding is needed to modernize the southwest chief line running from Hutchinson, Kansas, to Albuquerque so that it meets required passenger-rail

standards; and

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, New Mexico governmental entities, including Colfax county, Mora county, San Miguel county, Santa Fe county, the city of Albuquerque, the city of Las Vegas, the city of Raton, the city of Santa Fe, the town of Wagon Mound and the New Mexico municipal league, have resolved to support the southwest chief coalition's efforts;

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

transmitted to the members of the New Mexico congressional delegation; the governor; the New Mexico state transportation commission; the legislatures and the governors of the states of Colorado and Kansas; Amtrak; and the federal railroad administration.