

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 47

BY REPRESENTATIVES GADBERRY AND ECHOLS

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to study the development of passenger rail services along the Interstate 20 corridor in Louisiana in collaboration with other state transportation agencies in Texas and Mississippi and with Amtrak partners.

WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana is served by three long-distance Amtrak trains, with New Orleans serving as a hub; and

WHEREAS, the three long-distance trains are the City of New Orleans, operating between Chicago and New Orleans; the Sunset Limited, operating between Los Angeles and New Orleans; and the Crescent, operating between New York, Atlanta, and New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no commuter or intercity corridor service provided by Amtrak or other operators in the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, passenger rail services can strengthen the intermodal transportation system; and

WHEREAS, passenger rail services can create new options for users as they combine different transportation modes to complete a trip; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas are seeking to coordinate their efforts in order to facilitate passenger rail services along the Interstate 20 corridor between Marshall, Texas, and Meridian, Mississippi, through north Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, north Louisiana is the only gap in the entire nation in Amtrak's service lines; and

WHEREAS, bridging this gap would connect Dallas-Fort Worth all the way to Atlanta; and

WHEREAS, federal funds originally allocated to the state of Texas are now available for use in connection with rail infrastructure for the entire Interstate 20 corridor between Marshall, Texas, and Meridian, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Texas expressed a willingness to use a portion of those funds for the entire Interstate 20 corridor; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak analyzed the route and determined that passenger rail connectivity along the Interstate 20 corridor will not require an annual operating subsidy; and

WHEREAS, passenger rail services along the Interstate 20 corridor, home to several public institutions of higher education, will benefit the people of Louisiana by allowing greater mobility and expanding potential labor and tourism markets access to the region; and

WHEREAS, passenger rail services will improve access between north Louisiana and major regional economic and transportation centers in Dallas, Texas, and Atlanta, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, traffic congestion on Interstate 20 from Shreveport to Dallas is only expected to worsen over the next ten years, which makes the need for passenger rail service more prevalent.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Transportation and Development to study the development of passenger rail services along the Interstate 20 corridor in Louisiana in collaboration with the state transportation agencies of Texas and Mississippi and with Amtrak partners.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation and Development's recommendations shall consider several stops in Louisiana to allow passengers the opportunity to travel throughout north Louisiana and, at a minimum, shall include the following:

- (1) The route alternatives.
- (2) The station locations.
- (3) The infrastructure needs.
- (4) The ridership and revenue estimated.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the administration shall consider participating in the Interstate Rail Compacts Advancement Act as a participating state, if adopted by Congress; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the administration shall consider writing grant proposals to secure funding to facilitate passenger rail services along the Interstate 20 corridor and, at a minimum, shall include the following programs:

- (1) The Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program.
- (2) The Restoration and Enhancement Grants Program.
- (3) The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Program.
- (4) The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act.
- (5) The Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works detailing its findings and recommendations prior to March 1, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES