

RESOLUTION

IN SUPPORT OF A STATEWIDE INITIATIVE FOR LEGISLATIVE FUNDING TO RE-ESTABLISH A PASSENGER RAIL CONNECTION FOR WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

WHEREAS, rail service is an integral part of a comprehensive transportation system for the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, economic development, tourism and job creation will benefit through the enhancement of a passenger rail and bus system that serves the citizens of North Carolina and visitors to our state; and,

WHEREAS, we applaud the State of North Carolina for development of comprehensive intercity rail and transportation services in urban jurisdictions through the state, and recognize that Asheville and Western North Carolina have been without a passenger rail connection since 1975; and,

WHEREAS, there is a vital need to provide a strong and balanced transportation system that promotes freight and passenger service; and,

WHEREAS, an increase in state funding for bus-rail service in North Carolina is necessary to connect our small urban and rural areas of the state with the urbanized centers of our state; and,

WHEREAS, support by local and state elected officials is essential for the future of alternative transportation in North Carolina, such as the successful Amtrak Thruway bus-rail service between Morehead City and Wilson and between Wilmington and Wilson; and,

WHEREAS, support and utilization of transportation improvements by business and commercial interests is essential for the successful deployment of alternative transportation modes in North Carolina, especially in Western North Carolina; and,

WHEREAS, this resolution is a vehicle to express the twenty years of unified support of communities and chambers of commerce throughout Western North Carolina for increased statewide funding for bus- rail service; and,

WHEREAS, rail and bus linkages between communities and regions within North Carolina establish and strengthen social, historical, commercial and cultural bonds; and,

WHEREAS, the average return on investment for the surrounding community for station revitalizations throughout North Carolina is more than one dollar for every dollar invested, as demonstrated in Salisbury, Morganton, Marion, Old Fort and Asheville (with purchase of land); and,

WHEREAS, the associated improvements to rail facilities have increased the efficiency and safety of rail service, helped attract new freight traffic and provided environmental benefits by reducing the impact of traffic congestion on North Carolina's highways, particularly Interstate 40; and,

WHEREAS, an integrated bus-rail system will enhance accessibility and reliability for citizens, tourists and businesses in Western North Carolina, and by extension to the entire State of North Carolina; and,

WHEREAS, North Carolina Department of Transportation's Rail Division has agreed to manage, subject to NC Legislative appropriation, contract development and implementation of Amtrak Thruway bus service between Salisbury and Asheville, similar to the successful Amtrak Thruway bus-rail service in Eastern North Carolina that was intended to be extended to Western North Carolina.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that _____, through the adoption of this resolution, fully supports the creation of a comprehensive bus-rail system to serve Western North Carolina, that includes sufficient funding by the North Carolina General Assembly to the North Carolina Department of Transportation Rail Division for the proposed Amtrak Thruway bus service between Asheville and Salisbury. This service will be evaluated after two years by Amtrak, the North Carolina Department of Transportation Rail Division, the Western North Carolina Rail Committee Inc and the communities served by the Salisbury-Asheville bus-rail connection.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2019

Printed Name of Organization / Entity

By:

Signature of Authorized Signer

Printed Name of Authorized Signer

Printed Title of Authorized Signer