

SENATE No. 2096

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Adam G. Hinds, (BY REQUEST)

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act funding a study of passenger service on the housatonic rail line.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Karen Christensen

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*120 Castle Street, Great Barrington, MA
01230*

SENATE No. 2096

By Mr. Hinds (by request), a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2096) of Karen Christensen for legislation to fund a study of passenger service on the housatonic rail line. Transportation.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act funding a study of passenger service on the housatonic rail line.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation shall convene a working
2 group to be referred to as the Berkshire Passenger Rail Service Working Committee to evaluate
3 and issue a report on the economic and environmental benefits to the Berkshires, other western
4 counties of the Commonwealth, and to the Commonwealth as a whole of establishing year-
5 round, multiple-trip-per-day passenger rail service between the city of Pittsfield, Massachusetts
6 and New York, New York using the Housatonic Rail line.

7 The working group shall assess the short- and long-term economic benefits of passenger
8 service on the Housatonic rail line from: (1) direct and indirect jobs; (2) access to educational
9 opportunities; (3) access to affordable housing; (4) tourism, and; (5) tax and other revenues to
10 municipalities in the Berkshires and the Commonwealth.

11 The working group shall assess the environmental benefits of passenger service on the
12 Housatonic rail line, including but not limited to the following: climate-change resilience,

13 reduction in overall carbon emissions, transit-oriented development, and green-energy job
14 creation.

15 The working group shall consider the costs of adding passenger service to the Housatonic
16 rail line.

17 The working group shall contact state, local and county officials of the states of
18 Connecticut and New York to identify opportunities for collaboration and mutually-beneficial
19 improvements and expansions in passenger rail infrastructure and service.

20 The first meeting of the Berkshire Passenger Rail Service Working Committee shall take
21 place no later than September 1, 2020. The working group membership shall include, but not be
22 limited to, the Massachusetts secretary of transportation or a designee, the secretary of housing
23 and economic development or a designee, the secretary of energy and environment or a designee,
24 two members of the state house of representatives to be appointed by the speaker and two
25 members of the state senate to be appointed by the senate president, the congressman or designee
26 from the 1st and 2nd Massachusetts congressional districts, the United States senators or their
27 designees, the mayor of the city of Pittsfield, a designee from the Berkshire County Regional
28 Planning Commission, a representative of existing rail service stakeholders, and a representative
29 of a Berkshire passenger rail advocacy group. The secretary of transportation or a designee shall
30 chair the working group.

31 The working group shall submit its report to the Massachusetts Department of
32 Transportation, the executive office of housing and economic development, the senate and house
33 chairs of the joint committee on transportation, the senate and house chairs of the joint

- 34 committee on ways and means, and the senate and house chairs of the joint committee on
- 35 tourism, arts and cultural development on or before May 1, 2021.