

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING A STUDY TO ASSESS THE COSTS, BENEFITS, EFFICIENCIES AND INEFFICIENCIES OF THE NEW MEXICO RAIL RUNNER EXPRESS.

WHEREAS, the primary function of the Rail Runner express is to provide a viable commuter service, allowing commuters to take the train instead of using their personal vehicles to drive between Belen, Albuquerque, Bernalillo and Santa Fe; and

WHEREAS, the Rail Runner express offers a commuter option that has reduced the burden on commuters of rising gasoline prices; and

WHEREAS, the Rail Runner express may reduce motor vehicle emissions by reducing traffic volume, delay the need to widen highways for increased capacity and reduce highway maintenance costs; and

WHEREAS, in order to attract commuters to use the train, the Rail Runner express must provide a convenient, fast and expedient way for commuters to get to work; and

WHEREAS, at various times, and at various train stations, very few commuters board, or disembark from, the trains; and

WHEREAS, unnecessary train stops cause a longer commute for those commuters that do use the train; and

WHEREAS, the cost-effectiveness of the Rail Runner express depends in part on ridership levels; and

WHEREAS, a cost-benefit analysis of the Rail Runner express requires a study of many aspects of commuter train service, including operating costs, ridership, ticket prices, optimum frequency of trips, optimum frequency of stops, maintenance of stations, maintenance of railroad crossings, costs associated with traffic control, sections of track not in use, associated liability, maintenance of the locomotive and rail cars for the term of their projected use, employee overhead, including ticket agents, potential for lost revenue for unchecked ridership and availability of vehicle parking adjacent to train stations; and

WHEREAS, after more than three years of operation, a study would provide ample data to provide a better understanding of the costs, benefits, efficiencies and inefficiencies of the Rail Runner express;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative finance committee be requested to coordinate a study to be conducted by the department of transportation and the mid-region council of governments to study the costs, benefits, efficiencies and inefficiencies of the Rail Runner express; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study, when complete, be presented to the appropriate interim legislative committees by November 2011; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of transportation, the mid-region council of governments and the governor.