



HJ0139

LRB100 22392 ALS 41278 r

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Illinois and Chicago are known as the nation's
3 rail hub, and pursuant to data provided by the Metropolitan
4 Planning Council, the Chicago region serves as a national
5 east-west gateway for six of the seven major Class I railroads
6 that transport approximately 25 percent of all U.S. freight
7 rail traffic and 44 percent of all U.S. intermodal "container"
8 units, totaling more than 1.3 million loaded rail cars
9 annually; and

10 WHEREAS, Metra operates 691 weekday trains, stopping at 241
11 stations on 11 rail lines in the Chicago region; and

12 WHEREAS, Amtrak operates a nationwide rail network,
13 serving more than 500 destinations in 46 states, the District
14 of Columbia, and three Canadian provinces on more than 21,400
15 miles of routes, with Chicago serving as a major hub for most
16 of their interstate services; and

17 WHEREAS, These activities provide vital transit services
18 for residents of Illinois, Illinois commerce, and the nation;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Actual and projected growth in rail freight,
21 Metra, and Amtrak service continues to put pressure on existing

1 Illinois rail systems, often creating higher congestion and
2 reduced safety when passengers and freight share the same rail
3 lines; and

4 WHEREAS, The Illinois Department of Transportation
5 participated in a nine-state planning effort that resulted in
6 publication of the Midwest Regional Rail System (MWRRS)
7 executive report in September 2004, which outlines steps to
8 improve regional rail mobility and stimulate economic
9 development at an estimated budget of \$7.7 billion, and it is
10 unclear what impact has been achieved; and

11 WHEREAS, The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
12 mandates a process to use either an Environmental Assessment or
13 a more comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement to collect
14 data, evaluate impacts, review alternatives, and propose
15 project solutions; and

16 WHEREAS, One of the current rail projects being studied is
17 an Environmental Assessment of proposed improvements to the
18 Chicago-Milwaukee Intercity Passenger Rail Program; the
19 improvements are estimated to cost \$195 million plus the
20 increased annual operating expenses of adding three daily round
21 trips to the Amtrak Hiawatha service; and

22 WHEREAS, Several communities, including the Village of

1 Glenview and the City of Lake Forest, have expressed strong
2 concerns about this Environmental Assessment's lack of data and
3 missing analyses of potential impacts of and alternatives to
4 freight train holding tracks, noise, vibrations, releases into
5 the air to adjacent residential areas, hospital, schools, and
6 rare nature preserves; and

7 WHEREAS, It is in the public's best interest to fully
8 evaluate the benefits and impacts of rail projects in Illinois
9 prior to seeking public funding and agency permitting for such
10 projects; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
12 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE SENATE
13 CONCURRING HEREIN, That in accordance with the National
14 Environmental Policy Act and in support of potentially impacted
15 communities in Illinois, all proposed Illinois rail projects
16 with new freight train holding tracks adjacent to residential
17 areas, including the current Chicago-Milwaukee Intercity
18 Passenger Rail Program described above, shall receive full
19 Environmental Impact Statement reviews; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Illinois Department of Transportation
21 shall pursue options to eliminate or minimize the routing of
22 bypass freight traffic through the Chicago metropolitan area,
23 including prioritizing the review and study of rail bypass

1 systems around Chicago that would ensure coastal rail traffic
2 not destined for Chicago could more efficiently bypass the
3 Chicago region and significantly reduce the negative impacts of
4 freight rail in the highest populated areas of Illinois; and be
5 it further

6 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
7 presented to the members of the Illinois Congressional
8 Delegation and the Illinois Department of Transportation.