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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Illinois' economy depends on a robust and
3 efficient transportation network; and

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WHEREAS, The sheer size of our State, with automobile
5 travel from the south to the north taking as much as 6 hours,
6 leaves our cities and regions relatively disconnected from each
7 other, slowing our economic growth; and

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WHEREAS, One major transportation project can unite the
9 entire State's economy, linking together business centers and
10 generating efficiencies and economic growth; and

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WHEREAS, An Illinois Department of Transportation study
12 completed by the University of Illinois found that an
13 O'Hare-Union Station-Champaign-Springfield-St. Louis with a
14 Champaign-Indianapolis branch high speed rail line would
15 generate an operating surplus that would require no annual
16 subsidy; and

17

WHEREAS, The next steps in the planning process for a
18 statewide high speed rail line are an investment grade
19 ridership analysis to allow potential private financing
20 entities to assess the suitability of the high speed rail line
21 for investment and a Tier One Environmental Impact Statement to

1 qualify the project for federal funds; and

2 WHEREAS, The extension of the Metra Electric line south
3 from University Park through Will County to Kankakee has long
4 been a transportation objective for the south suburbs; this
5 high speed rail line would serve that market, bringing Kankakee
6 County, Will County, and southern Cook County modern
7 transportation access to Chicago and the southern part of the
8 State; and

9 WHEREAS, The State-owned land for the planned South
10 Suburban Airport becomes far more valuable if a high speed
11 train station is built on that site and was incorporated with
12 any future airport to be developed there, leveraging the
13 State's existing investment in the South Suburban Airport; and

14 WHEREAS, The convention business is a major industry for
15 Illinois' economy; any way that could improve the
16 attractiveness of our convention spaces like McCormick Place to
17 major shows is a key component to Illinois' prosperity; and

18 WHEREAS, Connecting McCormick Place, the continent's
19 largest exhibition venue, directly to O'Hare International
20 Airport, the nation's busiest airport, significantly enhances
21 the attractiveness of Chicago to trade shows, as it allows
22 visitors to avoid the chronically congested Kennedy Expressway

1 with a direct train ride to the existing Metra station in
2 McCormick Place; and

3 WHEREAS, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has recently stated his
4 interest in developing high speed rail from O'Hare to downtown
5 Chicago and has tasked new Aviation Commissioner Ginger Evans
6 with advancing that vision, which would serve as the key anchor
7 in a statewide high speed rail line; and

8 WHEREAS, Supporting and building new technology companies
9 is a key goal for creating more Illinois jobs; one of the
10 world's greatest centers for cutting-edge research in
11 technology and software is the University of Illinois at
12 Urbana-Champaign, but Illinois has lost thousands of graduates
13 to other states, which have created new technology companies
14 worth tens of billions of dollars; and

15 WHEREAS, Connecting the University of Illinois at
16 Urbana-Champaign to downtown Chicago via a 50 minute high-speed
17 train ride is the best way to integrate the financial and
18 business capital of Chicago with the intellectual and
19 technological capital of Urbana-Champaign to support and
20 create new billion-dollar technology businesses in Illinois;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Three Fortune 500 companies are in Downstate

1 Illinois, Archer Daniels Midland in Decatur, Caterpillar, Inc.
2 in Peoria, and State Farm Insurance Companies in Bloomington;
3 providing a world-class high speed rail line from O'Hare to
4 downstate Illinois with an eventual connecting train service to
5 other communities would significantly improve the entire
6 State's business climate, particularly for high-level
7 corporate executives who require convenient access to
8 international flights; and

9 WHEREAS, Placing the St. Louis-area terminus at the East
10 St. Louis Metrolink station would not only save a billion
11 dollars by avoiding the need to build a new bridge over the
12 Mississippi River, as passengers could simply take the existing
13 Metrolink from East St. Louis into Missouri, it would also
14 serve as a game-changer for East St. Louis, stimulating
15 economic development, jobs, and a sustainable tax base for one
16 of the State's most challenged communities; and

17 WHEREAS, Several nations have sent trade delegations to
18 Illinois expressing sincere interest in exporting their high
19 speed train systems to our State; several nations have also
20 offered to help finance a portion of the capital construction
21 costs, including France, China, and Japan; and

22 WHEREAS, To date, Illinois has been unable to take
23 advantage of the interest from other nations in partially

1 financing and constructing a high speed rail line, mainly due
2 to a lack of planning; therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL
4 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge Governor Rauner
5 and the Illinois Department of Transportation to build upon the
6 work of the 2013 high speed rail report and immediately task
7 their existing consultants to prepare an investment-grade
8 ridership analysis for distribution to interested parties
9 around the world; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That we urge Governor Rauner and the Illinois
11 Department of Transportation to concurrently task their
12 existing consultants to prepare as expeditiously as possible
13 the Tier One Environmental Impact Statement to qualify the high
14 speed rail project for federal funds and to seek federal
15 planning funds to help pay for this study; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That we commend Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel for
17 his commitment to building high speed train service between
18 O'Hare International Airport and downtown Chicago and urge all
19 State agencies to provide any and all assistance to the City of
20 Chicago in implementing this crucial transportation project;
21 and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That we call upon Congress to return to their

1 previous practice in Fiscal Year 2010 of appropriating \$2.5
2 billion in the annual federal budget for capital grants to
3 states for high speed rail projects in order to help fund this
4 high speed rail project; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
6 delivered to the Governor, the Illinois Secretary of
7 Transportation, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and the members of
8 the Illinois congressional delegation.