



HR1060

LRB095 20306 WGH 47368 r

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Amtrak service between Chicago, Homewood,
3 Kankakee, Gilman, Rantoul, Champaign-Urbana, Mattoon,
4 Effingham, Centralia, Du Quoin, and Carbondale is a vital
5 economic development tool; and

6 WHEREAS, The City of New Orleans train serves these
7 communities, as well as the communities of Fulton, Kentucky,
8 Newbern-Dyersburg, Tennessee, Memphis, Tennessee, Greenwood,
9 Mississippi, Yazoo City, Mississippi, Jackson, Mississippi,
10 Hazlehurst, Mississippi, Brookhaven, Mississippi, McComb,
11 Mississippi, Hammond, Louisiana, and New Orleans, Louisiana
12 with one daily round trip; and

13 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois finances 2 additional daily
14 trains, the Illini and the Saluki, for a total of 3 daily round
15 trips; and

16 WHEREAS, Since the State of Illinois financed the second
17 daily round trip in 2006, ridership has grown at exceptional
18 rates, showing the enormous demand for the service; and

19 WHEREAS, Illinois is now a national model for Amtrak
20 expansion; and

1 WHEREAS, The tracks are owned and maintained by the
2 Canadian National Railway Company; and

3 WHEREAS, The Canadian National Railway Company has been a
4 responsible partner with Amtrak and the State of Illinois in
5 providing relatively on-time performance for Amtrak trains on
6 the route; and

7 WHEREAS, There is no direct connection between Canadian
8 National tracks and Chicago's Union Station, requiring Amtrak
9 trains to stop and then travel in a reverse direction at low
10 speeds into Chicago's Union Station; and

11 WHEREAS, This lack of a direct connection causes travel
12 delays of 15 to 20 minutes; and

13 WHEREAS The additional 15 to 20 minutes of travel time is
14 the main reason why current Amtrak service is not faster than
15 driving for northbound travel; and

16 WHEREAS, The additional 15 to 20 minutes of travel time
17 makes Amtrak service a less powerful economic development tool
18 for Illinois communities and particularly hurts the economic
19 progress of Southern and Central Illinois; and

20 WHEREAS, The best method for eliminating this 15 to 20

1 minute delay is to build a rail interchange connection between
2 the Canadian National tracks and the Norfolk Southern tracks
3 near 76th Street in Chicago in an area known as Grand Crossing;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Building the Grand Crossing interchange will
6 allow a direct connection for Amtrak trains to Chicago's Union
7 Station and eliminate the 15 to 20 minute delay; and

8 WHEREAS, Canadian National has announced plans to purchase
9 the EJ&E Railway that loops through Chicago's suburbs; and

10 WHEREAS, Such a purchase would eliminate the value of the
11 current track used by Amtrak from the area known as Grand
12 Crossing to Chicago's Union Station for Canadian National,
13 leading to its eventual abandonment; and

14 WHEREAS, The cost of maintaining the track between 76th
15 Street and Chicago's Union Station would then be borne by
16 Amtrak at an unknown cost; and

17 WHEREAS, Canadian National has filed a request with the
18 federal Surface Transportation Board seeking required approval
19 for this purchase of the EJ&E Railway; and

20 WHEREAS, Federal regulators with the Surface

1 Transportation Board are charged with considering the public
2 interest in deciding whether to approve or deny Canadian
3 National's proposed purchase of the EJ&E Railway; and

4 WHEREAS, There are many other issues that affect Chicago
5 suburban communities regarding the proposed purchase by the
6 Canadian National of the EJ&E Railway, notable increased
7 freight traffic for many communities; therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
9 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that it
10 is State policy that the 15 to 20 minute delay in Amtrak's
11 travel time be eliminated; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Grand Crossing Connection be built and
13 operational for Amtrak service as at least one condition before
14 federal regulators approve the purchase by Canadian National of
15 the EJ&E Railway; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the Grand Crossing Connection be built and
17 operational before the St. Charles Air Line is ever dismantled;
18 and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be presented to
20 the mayors of each of the communities served by the City of New
21 Orleans, the Illini, and the Saluki trains, the Surface

1 Transportation Board, the governors and legislative leaders of
2 the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Tennessee,
3 and the congressional delegations of the states of Louisiana,
4 Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Illinois.