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SENATE RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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WHEREAS, Actual and projected growth in rail freight, Metra, and Amtrak service continues to put pressure on existing Illinois rail systems, often creating higher congestion and reduced safety when passenger and freight share the same rail

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1 lines; and

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

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

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

20 WHEREAS, Several communities, including the Village of  
21 Glenview and the City of Lake Forest, have expressed strong  
22 concerns about this Environmental Assessment's lack of data and

1 missing analyses of potential impacts of, and alternatives to,  
2 freight train holding tracks, noise, vibrations, releases into  
3 the air to adjacent residential areas, hospital, schools, and  
4 rare nature preserves; and

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

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

18 RESOLVED, That the Illinois Department of Transportation  
19 is urged to pursue options to eliminate or minimize the routing  
20 of bypass freight traffic through the Chicago metropolitan  
21 area, including prioritizing the review and study of rail  
22 bypass systems around Chicago that would ensure coastal rail  
23 traffic not destined for Chicago could more efficiently bypass

1 the Chicago region and significantly reduce the negative  
2 impacts of freight rail in the highest populated areas of  
3 Illinois; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
5 delivered to all members of the Illinois Congressional  
6 Delegation and the Secretary of Transportation.