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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 26
49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY
Jeff Steinborn

A JOINT MEMORIAL
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO STUDY THE
FEASIBILITY OF EXTENDING THE RAIL RUNNER EXPRESS FROM SANTA FE
TO LAS CRUCES.

WHEREAS, the "Rail Runner Express" is a commuter rail
service that runs between Belen and Santa Fe carrying people to
work, stores, entertainment and tourist attractions; and

WHEREAS, to date, two phases of the Rail Runner Express
have been completed, and the availability of this commuter
option has reduced the burden on commuters of skyrocketing
gasoline prices; and

WHEREAS, phase one extended commuter rail service from
Belen to the town of Bernalillo in July 2006; and

WHEREAS, phase two extended commuter rail service from
Bernalillo to Santa Fe, completing the entire route from Belen

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1 to Santa Fe in December 2008; and

2 WHEREAS, the residents of Las Cruces and Dona Ana county
3 would like to see the Rail Runner Express extended south to
4 provide rail service for commuters and others to Las Cruces and
5 the towns in between; and

6 WHEREAS, Las Cruces has been ranked as one of the fastest-
7 growing communities in the United States for the last decade
8 and is now the second-largest city in New Mexico, with more
9 than seventy-four thousand residents, and Dona Ana county is
10 the second-largest county in New Mexico, with close to one
11 hundred seventy-five thousand residents; and

12 WHEREAS, the population of the region is projected to
13 continue to grow to more than three hundred thousand people by
14 the year 2015; and

15 WHEREAS, Las Cruces is a thriving business environment and
16 has been consistently ranked as one of the best metropolitan
17 areas for business and careers by the Forbes-Milken institute
18 study; and

19 WHEREAS, many people have a need to travel regularly
20 between Las Cruces and Albuquerque for meetings and to conduct
21 business; and

22 WHEREAS, Las Cruces is part of the "BorderPlex", along
23 with El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico, due to its proximity to
24 those major cities and the interchange of two interstate
25 highways; and

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1 WHEREAS, the combined factors of a strong business
2 community, the proximity to El Paso and Juarez and the current
3 and projected population growth suggest that potentially great
4 value could be realized by connecting this vital community with
5 northern regions of the state; and

6 WHEREAS, Las Cruces is proud of its preserved, historic
7 train station, and railroad track already exists between it and
8 Santa Fe; and

9 WHEREAS, the Rail Runner Express has met with great
10 enthusiasm and has been heavily patronized by commuters who
11 work in Albuquerque but live in outlying communities and by
12 commuters who work in Santa Fe and live in other communities;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, the Rail Runner Express could serve additional
15 purposes besides commuter travel, such as providing access to
16 this beautiful region of the state for residents and tourists
17 as well as promoting convenient commerce between the northwest
18 region of the state and the state's capital city;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
20 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of transportation be
21 requested to complete a feasibility study to determine possible
22 routes, optimum frequency of trips and potential costs of
23 extending the Rail Runner Express from Santa Fe to Las Cruces;
24 and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study should create plans

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1 that can be set into action to maximize the use of possible
2 funds that the federal government may make available in the
3 future for public transit systems; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that those plans should also
5 consider the need to ease the congestion on state highways
6 running from Santa Fe in northern New Mexico to Las Cruces in
7 southern New Mexico to reduce the need for expansion of
8 highways and the costs of maintaining those highways; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the feasibility study, when
10 complete, be presented to appropriate legislative interim
11 committees by November 2010 and that a copy be submitted to the
12 library of the legislative council service; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
14 transmitted to the secretary-designate of transportation and
15 the governor.

16 - 4 -