

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 26

**49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009**

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO STUDY THE  
FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING A COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE BETWEEN LAS  
CRUCES AND EL PASO, TEXAS.

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

1 to Santa Fe in December 2008; and

2 WHEREAS, the residents of Las Cruces and Dona Ana county  
3 would like to see rail service provided for commuters between  
4 Las Cruces and El Paso, Texas; and

5 WHEREAS, Las Cruces has been ranked as one of the fastest-  
6 growing communities in the United States for the last decade  
7 and is now the second-largest city in New Mexico, and Dona Ana  
8 county is the second-largest county in New Mexico; and

9 WHEREAS, the combined population of Dona Ana county, El  
10 Paso county and the Juarez area is expected to surpass three  
11 million five hundred thousand by 2010; and

12 WHEREAS, work commuting data indicates there are well over  
13 twenty thousand commuters that travel between Dona Ana county,  
14 El Paso county and the Juarez area; and

15 WHEREAS, Dona Ana county does not have large passenger air  
16 travel available, making it necessary for residents of that  
17 county to travel to the El Paso international airport, which  
18 serves well over three million passengers per year; and

19 WHEREAS, reciprocal in-state tuition programs are in place  
20 at New Mexico state university, the university of Texas at El  
21 Paso and El Paso community college, which would provide  
22 additional incentives and opportunities for students on both  
23 sides of the state line; and

24 WHEREAS, many people have a need to travel regularly  
25 between Las Cruces and El Paso for meetings and to conduct

1 business; and

2 WHEREAS, the combined factors of a strong business  
3 community, the proximity of Las Cruces to El Paso and Juarez  
4 and the current and projected population growth suggest that  
5 potentially great value could be realized by connecting these  
6 vital communities;

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
8 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of transportation be  
9 requested to complete a feasibility study to determine possible  
10 routes, optimum frequency of trips and potential costs of  
11 developing a commuter rail service from Las Cruces to El Paso,  
12 including coordination on the study with the Texas department  
13 of transportation; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study should create plans  
15 that can be set into action to maximize the use of possible  
16 funds that New Mexico, Texas and the federal government may  
17 make available in the future for public transit systems; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that those plans should also  
19 consider the need to ease the congestion on interstate highways  
20 running between Las Cruces and El Paso to reduce the need for  
21 expansion of highways and the costs of maintaining those  
22 highways; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the feasibility study, to the  
24 extent study resources are available, consider the expansion of  
25 the commuter rail system north of Las Cruces to the New Mexico

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1 spaceport and other New Mexico areas of interest, including  
2 eventual connection with the Rail Runner Express; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the feasibility study, when  
4 complete, be presented to appropriate legislative interim  
5 committees by November 2010 and that a copy be submitted to the  
6 library of the legislative council service; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
8 transmitted to the secretary-designate of transportation and  
9 the governor.

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