

CITY of ALBUQUERQUE

TWENTIETH COUNCIL

COUNCIL BILL NO. R-13-153 ENACTMENT NO. _____

SPONSORED BY: Isaac Benton

1 RESOLUTION

2 SUPPORTING THE CONTINUATION OF THE CURRENT ROUTE OF AMTRAK'S
3 SOUTHWEST CHIEF THROUGH NORTHERN NEW MEXICO AND CALLING ON
4 THE METRO REGION'S STATE LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION, THE GOVERNOR,
5 AND THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SUPPORT THE
6 CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE SOUTHWEST CHIEF ON ITS PRESENT
7 ROUTE ALIGNMENT.

8 WHEREAS, Amtrak, the national railroad passenger corporation, a
9 federally chartered corporation, provides train service to millions of
10 Americans each year and operates two long-distance routes through New
11 Mexico; and

12 WHEREAS, Amtrak's Southwest Chief serves New Mexico through its daily
13 Chicago-Los Angeles route; and

14 WHEREAS, the Southwest Chief and its famous predecessors have served
15 this route since the late 1880's; and

16 WHEREAS, the Southwest Chief is a key economic contributor to northern
17 New Mexico, including Albuquerque, through employment, procurement,
18 contracts, and tourism; and

19 WHEREAS, Amtrak provides a transportation link to the residents of
20 northern New Mexico that is of growing importance as rising energy prices
21 reduce the attractiveness of driving and flying; and

22 WHEREAS, the Southwest Chief carries passengers through scenic
23 landscapes not visible from highways and provides an energy-efficient form of
24 transportation; and

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1 WHEREAS, many New Mexico residents who ride the Southwest Chief
2 depend on it as the only form of public transportation between Raton and
3 Albuquerque; and

4 WHEREAS, in federal fiscal year 2012, passengers boarded and alighted
5 from the Southwest Chief in New Mexico at Albuquerque, Lamy, Las Vegas
6 and Raton more than one hundred twelve thousand times; and

7 WHEREAS, each year, about four thousand four hundred Boy Scouts who
8 camp at the Philmont scout ranch travel on the Southwest Chief, using the
9 Raton station; and

10 WHEREAS, many New Mexico counties, including Bernalillo, Colfax, Mora,
11 San Miguel, Sandoval and Santa Fe, depend on property tax revenues paid by
12 the BNSF railway; and

13 WHEREAS, the BNSF railway company, formerly the Burlington Northern
14 and Santa Fe railway company, owns and leases to Amtrak most of the line on
15 which the Southwest Chief carries passengers in New Mexico; and

16 WHEREAS, capital funding is needed to modernize the Southwest Chief
17 line running from Hutchinson, Kansas, to Albuquerque so that it meets
18 required passenger-rail standards; and

19 WHEREAS, the BNSF railway management has said that it will not renew
20 Amtrak's lease, which expires in January 2014, unless Amtrak pays to upgrade
21 that line; and

22 WHEREAS, the United States Congress has not provided for a permanent
23 funding stream to cover the costs of Amtrak's infrastructure needs; and

24 WHEREAS, Amtrak's inability to secure adequate capital funding for
25 improvements imminently threatens the viability of the Southwest Chief line
26 from Raton to Albuquerque; and

27 WHEREAS, the Southwest Chief Coalition, a group of concerned citizens
28 and elected officials from Colorado, Kansas and New Mexico, has assembled
29 in an effort to preserve the Southwest Chief; and

30 WHEREAS, New Mexico governmental entities, including Colfax County,
31 Mora County, San Miguel County, Santa Fe County, the City of Las Vegas, the
32 City of Raton, the City of Santa Fe, and the Town of Wagon Mound along with

1 the New Mexico Municipal League have resolved to support the Southwest
2 Chief Coalition's efforts; and

3 WHEREAS, the City Council, on October 15, 2012, issued a proclamation
4 recognizing the Southwest Chief for its many contributions to New Mexico and
5 Albuquerque and encouraged citizens, agencies and organizations to actively
6 endorse the continuation of the current route through northern New Mexico;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, memorials have been introduced in the New Mexico Senate and
9 House of Representatives recognizing the importance of Amtrak and its
10 contribution to New Mexico's economy; acknowledging the threat to viability
11 of the Southwest Chief train; requesting that the New Mexico congressional
12 delegation and the Governor support the continued operation of the
13 Southwest Chief.

14 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF
15 ALBUQUERQUE:

16 Section 1. The City of Albuquerque recognizes the importance of Amtrak,
17 the national railroad passenger corporation, and its many contributions to
18 New Mexico.

19 Section 2. The Council calls upon the metro region's State legislative
20 delegation, the Governor , and the New Mexico Congressional delegation to (a)
21 support the continued operation of the Southwest Chief on its present route
22 alignment, and (b) oppose any actions that would adversely affect the viability
23 of the operation of the Southwest Chief in northern and central New Mexico.

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