CITY of ALBUQUERQUE TWENTY THIRD COUNCIL

COUNCI		L BILL NO	R-18-54	ENACTMENT NO.		
SPONSORED BY: Isaac Benton						
	1			RESOLUTION		
	2	SUPPORTING	G THE CONTINUA	TION OF SERVICE ON THE CURRENT ROUTE		
	3	OF AMTRAK	'S SOUTHWEST (CHIEF BY RAIL THROUGH NORTHERN NEW		
	4	MEXICO ON	ITS PRESENT RO	UTE ALIGNMENT, AND SUPPORTING FEDERAL		
	5	FUNDING IN	SUPPORT OF MA	INTENANCE AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS		
	6	ALONG THE	ROUTE.			
	7	WHEREAS	S, Amtrak, the nat	tional railroad passenger corporation, a		
	8	federally chartered corporation, provides train service to millions of				
	9	Americans ea	ach year and ope	rates two long-distance routes through New		
	10	Mexico; and				
, <u>c</u>	11	WHEREAS	S, Amtrak's South	nwest Chief serves New Mexico through its daily		
- New Deletion	12	Chicago-Los	Angeles route; a	nd		
ਜ਼ '	13	WHEREAS	S, the Southwest	Chief and its famous predecessors have served		
iterii Xial	14	this route sin	nce the late 1880's	s; and		
Mate	15	WHEREAS	, the Southwest (Chief is a key economic contributor to northern		
Bracketed/Underscored Material] - New B racketed/Strikethrough Material] - Deletic	16	New Mexico	and Albuquerque	, through employment, procurement, contracts,		
	17	and tourism;	and			
	18	WHEREAS	S, Amtrak provide	es a transportation link to the residents of		
	19	northern Nev	v Mexico that pro	vides an alternative to driving and flying; and		
	20	WHEREAS	S, the Southwest	Chief carries passengers through scenic		
	21	landscapes r	not visible from hi	ghways and provides a highly energy-efficient,		
	. 22	safe form of	transportation; ar	nd		
	23	WHEREAS	S, many New Mex	ico residents who ride the Southwest Chief		
	24	depend on it	as the only form	of public transportation between Raton and		
	25	Albuquerque	; and			

1	WHEREAS, in federal fiscal year 2017, passengers boarded and alighted
2	from the Southwest Chief in New Mexico at Albuquerque, Lamy, Las Vegas
3	and Raton more than one hundred four thousand times; and
4	WHEREAS, each year, about four thousand four hundred Boy Scouts who
5	camp at the Philmont scout ranch travel on the Southwest Chief, using the
6	Raton station; and
7	WHEREAS, many New Mexico counties, including Bernalillo, Colfax, Mora,
8	San Miguel, Sandoval and Santa Fe, depend on property tax revenues paid by
9	the BNSF railway; and
10	WHEREAS, the BNSF railway company, formerly the Burlington Northern
11	and Santa Fe railway company, owns and leases to Amtrak most of the line on
12	which the Southwest Chief carries passengers in New Mexico; and
13	WHEREAS, capital funding is needed to modernize and improve safety on
14	the Southwest Chief line running from Trinidad, Colorado to Albuquerque so
15	that it meets required passenger-rail standards; and
16	WHEREAS, the United States Congress has not provided for a permanent
17	funding stream to cover the costs of Amtrak's infrastructure needs; and
18	WHEREAS, Amtrak's inability to secure adequate capital funding for
19	improvements has led to a proposal by Amtrak leadership to replace its
20	passenger rail service between Trinidad and Albuquerque with motor bus
21	service, thereby forcing passengers to leave the safest form of surface
22	transportation in the country and travel by bus on an interstate highway
23	system with a significantly higher safety risk than the current Amtrak
24	operation, significantly and negatively affecting the quality, safety and
25	convenience of the service for most users, or, to possibly discontinue service;
26	and
27	WHEREAS, although Colfax County was awarded a \$16 million grant from
28	the federal Department of Transportation's Transportation Investment
29	Generating Economic Recovery program to keep the Southwest Chief in
30	operation through the county on a stretch of private rails owned by BNSF,
31	Amtrak has indicated that it will not release the previously agreed upon
32	matching funds, threatening hundreds of millions of dollars of matching

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2	improve the rail facilities and safety; and
3	WHEREAS, the Rio Metro Transit District, which operates commuter rail
4	service between Santa Fe and Albuquerque, has secured funding to
5	implement positive train control (PTC) on its segment of the same route
6	owned by the State of New Mexico, thereby increasing the safety of an already
7	extremely safe mode of travel; and
8	WHEREAS, this stretch of rail service is part of the larger Cerrillos to Raton
9	BNSF railbed that the previous state government administration agreed to
10	purchase from BNSF to keep the Southwest Chief serving a northern route
11	through New Mexico but which the current state administration reneged upon
12	when it came into office; and
13	WHEREAS, in light of the commitment of the Colorado and Kansas
14	legislatures to continue funding Southwest Chief passenger rail service
15	through their states, it is imperative that New Mexico continue to support the
16	Chief's northern route through our state; and
17	WHEREAS, on May 31, 2018 the entire New Mexico delegation to the United
18	States Congress joined other southwest area senators, imploring Amtrak to
19	release available funds from federal transportation grants to modernize and
20	improve safety on this segment of the route of the Southwest Chief, and to
21	maintain its current service.
22	WHERAS, on July 25, 2018 the U.S. Senate adopted an amendment to an
23	appropriations bill affirming the body's support for long-distance train service
24	in the U.S., including the Southwest Chief.
25	BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF
26	ALBUQUERQUE:
27	Section 1. The City of Albuquerque recognizes the importance of Amtrak,
28	the national railroad passenger corporation, and its many contributions to
29	New Mexico.
30	Section 2. The City calls upon Amtrak and the Federal Railroad
31	Administration to maintain the current passenger rail service upon the current
32	route and railbed, and to abide by previous commitments to release funds to
33	Colfax County

investments by other government and private entities in recent years to

1	Section 3. The City opposes any actions that would adversely affect the
2	viability of the operation of the Southwest Chief in northern and central New
3	Mexico.
4	Section 4. The City calls upon the New Mexico State legislature and the
5	next state administration to fund and support purchase by the State of the
6	remainder of the railbed used by the Southwest Chief north of Santa Fe to the
7	state line.
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