

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 48

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman ROBERT D. CLIFTON

District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)

Assemblywoman NANCY F. MUNOZ

District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)

Assemblywoman BETTYLOU DECROCE

District 26 (Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Chiaravalloti and Assemblywoman Lampitt

SYNOPSIS

Urges Congress to examine operations of Amtrak at New York Pennsylvania Station.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging Congress to examine the
2 operations of Amtrak at New York Pennsylvania Station.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, The National Railroad Passenger Corporation, commonly
5 known as Amtrak, serves as the nation's passenger railroad
6 operator, operating more than 21,000 route miles of railroad in 46
7 states, the District of Columbia, and three Canadian provinces; and
8 **WHEREAS**, Amtrak provides state-supported corridor service in 15
9 states, including the Northeast Corridor, and for four commuter rail
10 agencies, including the commuter rail operations of the New Jersey
11 Transit Corporation (New Jersey Transit) and the Long Island Rail
12 Road (LIRR); and
13 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey Transit and the LIRR provide commuter rail
14 service to New York Pennsylvania Station (Penn Station) in
15 Manhattan, which is owned and operated by Amtrak and is the
16 busiest train station in America with a ridership of over 10 million
17 passengers in 2016; and
18 **WHEREAS**, According to Amtrak, between Penn Station's three train
19 operators – Amtrak, New Jersey Transit, and the LIRR – Penn
20 Station accommodates more than 1,300 train movements per week
21 on infrastructure that was not designed to accommodate today's
22 levels of train traffic; and
23 **WHEREAS**, According to Amtrak, Penn Station saw an average of 661
24 train movements per week in 1976, which was historic for the time
25 period but was taxing on the station's infrastructure as the station
26 was not intended to carry that volume of traffic; and
27 **WHEREAS**, Since 1976, the total number of train movements at Penn
28 Station has doubled, with Amtrak increasing its regional operations
29 by 72 percent and the commuter operations of New Jersey Transit
30 increasing by more than 200 percent; and
31 **WHEREAS**, As cities have grown and highway congestion has
32 increased, the Northeast Corridor and Penn Station have become
33 critical in the connection of commuter rail systems, such as New
34 Jersey Transit and LIRR, to the central business districts that impact
35 the nation's economy; and
36 **WHEREAS**, The challenges that come with maintaining Penn Station,
37 which is operating beyond capacity, are compounded by the
38 station's age and the lack of investment in the station at the federal
39 level; and
40 **WHEREAS**, The various commuter railroads, including New Jersey
41 Transit, that use Amtrak infrastructure, such as Penn Station, pay
42 Amtrak for the portion of operating and capital costs attributable to
43 their use of Amtrak's infrastructure, yet Amtrak has failed to make
44 the necessary capital investments and the federal government has
45 failed to provide the necessary funds to make up for shortfalls in the
46 costs to maintain that infrastructure; and
47 **WHEREAS**, Although Penn Station is owned by Amtrak, commuter
48 train traffic accounts for over 1,000 of the 1,300 train movements,

1 which makes up the majority of train movements that Penn Station
2 accommodates, and there is little transparency regarding how often
3 the commuter rail systems operated by New Jersey Transit and
4 LIRR are consulted in decision-making processes concerning Penn
5 Station; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Years of under-investment in Penn Station's infrastructure
7 by Amtrak and steady traffic growth at Penn Station have led to
8 issues in the reliability of service for commuter train riders at the
9 station, with the long term consequences of those failures resulting
10 in the derailment of an Amtrak train on March 24, 2017 and the
11 derailment of a New Jersey Transit train on April 3, 2017; and

12 **WHEREAS**, The relatively minor derailments impacted an estimated
13 70,000 passengers as well as travel in and out of Penn Station and
14 throughout the Northeast Corridor for days, resulting in suspensions
15 and cancellations of service, delays, and significant schedule
16 disruptions to Amtrak, New Jersey Transit, and LIRR service; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Amtrak announced in 2017 and 2018 that it would conduct
18 a series of major track repairs and switch renewal projects at Penn
19 Station, in an effort to prevent derailments, however, the projects
20 also caused delays as they required Amtrak to close several tracks
21 at Penn Station for days or weeks at a time, including delays to
22 New Jersey Transit rail service that resulted in longer commutes for
23 many rail passengers in New Jersey; and

24 **WHEREAS**, Amtrak's decision to close tracks at Penn Station and
25 reduce capacity is one that should have attempted to cause as little
26 inconvenience as possible to the commuter rail systems that
27 conduct a majority of the train movements at the station and should
28 have included New Jersey Transit and the LIRR as the operators of
29 those commuter rail systems in the decision-making processes
30 concerning the station; and

31 **WHEREAS**, With the impact that Penn Station and the Northeast
32 Corridor have on New Jersey and the region, it is in the best interest
33 of rail passengers in New Jersey and the region for this House to
34 urge Congress to examine the operations of Amtrak at Penn Station,
35 including Amtrak's inclusion of the commuter rail systems that use
36 Penn Station in the decision-making processes concerning the
37 station; now, therefore,

38
39 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
40 Jersey:

41
42 1. This House respectfully urges the United States Congress to
43 examine the operations of the National Railroad Passenger
44 Corporation, commonly known as Amtrak, at New York
45 Pennsylvania Station, including determining the advisability of
46 requiring that the commuter rail systems that use New York
47 Pennsylvania Station be involved in the decision-making processes
48 concerning the station.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, the Speaker and the Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, every member of Congress elected from the State of New Jersey, the President and Chief Executive Officer of Amtrak, and the Executive Director of the New Jersey Transit Corporation.

STATEMENT

13 This resolution respectfully urges the United States Congress to
14 examine the operations of the National Railroad Passenger
15 Corporation, commonly known as Amtrak, at New York
16 Pennsylvania Station (Penn Station), including determining the
17 advisability of requiring that the commuter rail systems that use
18 Penn Station be involved in the decision-making processes
19 concerning the station.