

Senators Proos, Jansen, Meekhof and Hansen offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 128.

A resolution to support the city of New Buffalo's grant application to improve the Pere Marquette and Wolverine Intercity Passenger Rail Services.

Whereas, The Pere Marquette service operates along a rail corridor that includes the cities of Grand Rapids, Holland, Bangor, and St. Joseph, Michigan, and continues on to Chicago; and

Whereas, The Pere Marquette service provides one round trip daily between these Michigan communities and Chicago, posting both record ridership and revenue in 2011; and

Whereas, The Pere Marquette service runs on a different rail corridor than the Wolverine service just outside of New Buffalo; and

Whereas, New Buffalo is a station stop along the Wolverine and Blue Water service, which is on the federally-designated Chicago Hub (Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac) High Speed Rail Corridor, and recently was approved by the Federal Railroad Administration for passenger speeds up to 110 mph on track owned by Amtrak; and

Whereas, New Buffalo has submitted a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant application to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to study and design a connection of the Pere Marquette service to the federally-designated Chicago Hub (Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac) High Speed Rail Corridor just east of the city of New Buffalo; and

Whereas, This study and design will ultimately provide for the construction of a connection between the Pere Marquette and the Wolverine services; and

Whereas, This connection will provide improvements that will aid both current and future service reliability and access to higher speeds for the Pere Marquette service; and

Whereas, This project, upon completion, will improve all Michigan intercity passenger rail services; and

Whereas, This project will not only significantly improve the Pere Marquette service infrastructure, but will also contribute to the region's economic development and competitiveness; and

Whereas, The New Buffalo TIGER grant application also calls for adding additional track, known as double tracking, a 10-mile section along the Wolverine service from Dowagiac to Niles, thereby increasing capacity of passenger rail service and preparing for future service increases envisioned in the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and the Michigan State Rail Plan; and

Whereas, Connecting the Pere Marquette service to the Wolverine service will build a safer, more integrated, and productive transportation network; and

Whereas, These improvements on the federally-designated Chicago Hub (Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac) High Speed Rail Corridor will provide for future increases to passenger rail traffic and reduce congestion, which will also benefit the Blue Water service (Port Huron-Chicago) which merges with the Wolverine service at Battle Creek; and

Whereas, The New Buffalo TIGER grant application will provide an integrated rail service in West Michigan and create an opportunity for increasing economic development and tourism along all of Michigan's passenger rail corridors; and

Whereas, Michigan's success with passenger rail service is due to the collaboration by communities along the rail corridors on projects like this; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we strongly endorse and support New Buffalo's application for a 2012 TIGER Grant from the United States Department of Transportation to improve the Pere Marquette and Wolverine Intercity Passenger Rail Services; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to Michigan's congressional delegation and the United States Secretary of Transportation.