

POLICY RESOLUTION PR-19-05
TITLE: AASHTO INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL LEADERSHIP GROUP

WHEREAS, AASHTO believes that “intercity passenger rail service is a basic element of the nation’s multimodal transportation system;” and

WHEREAS, AASHTO has called for “the enactment of long-term legislation assuring that the nation’s travelers will have efficient and dependable intercity passenger rail service;” and

WHEREAS, the work of AASHTO’s Standing Committee on Rail Transportation and other organizations such as the States for Passenger Rail Coalition and the Council of Northeast Governors has created a strong foundation for action; and,

WHEREAS, AASHTO’s policy (R12) proposes that the long-term intercity passenger rail legislation should:

1. “Ensure the level of federal responsibility necessary for sustainable financing and system integrity, quality and accountability;”
2. “Establish a sound foundation for passenger rail service partnerships between the States and the federal government;”
3. “Provide a stable and fiscally responsible system for funding rail passenger operating costs;”
4. “Create a dedicated, sustainable source of funding for intercity rail passenger infrastructure improvements, to maintain, in partnership with the freight railroads and other stakeholders, a world class rail transportation network fueling economic growth and development;”
5. “Incorporate sufficient flexibilities to enable the States to set their spending priorities and implementation timing based on their own unique circumstances, consistent with national rail transportation policy;” and,

WHEREAS, AASHTO’s legislative Action Agenda has urged Congress to provide “the funding needed for Amtrak to continue operation of current services and not interrupt vital commuter-rail services while a long-term policy for intercity passenger rail is developed and enacted;” and,

WHEREAS, AASHTO has urged the “Administration and the Congress to provide national leadership and engage with the states to chart the course toward a long-term viable passenger rail system;” and

WHEREAS, there is a widespread conviction that states must play a leadership role in ensuring that any intercity passenger rail solution that is ultimately adopted will meet the mobility needs of 21st century passengers,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the AASHTO Board of Directors supports the establishment of the AASHTO Intercity Passenger Rail Leadership Group; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AASHTO Intercity Passenger Rail Leadership Group will spearhead the effort to achieve enactment of legislation based on AASHTO policy, satisfactory to the interests of states, which creates a stable structure for the development of intercity passenger rail service into the future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Leadership Group will be chaired by the Chairman of the AASHTO Standing Committee Rail Transportation, will consist of members appointed by AASHTO's President, will be supported by the Standing Committee on Rail Transportation, will be representative of AASHTO's member departments, and will report regularly on its progress to the AASHTO Executive Committee and Board of Directors.