



RESOLUTION
in Support of the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund

WHEREAS, freight and passenger mobility is critical to the economic prosperity and quality of life in the state of Texas and the Austin-San Antonio Corridor, and

WHEREAS, population growth and increased international trade have combined to create both freight movement and passenger vehicle congestion throughout the state of Texas and the Austin-San Antonio Corridor, and

WHEREAS, the state's population has grown by 57% and the total passenger miles driven rose by 95% over the past 25 years, but highway lane miles increased by just 8% over the same period, and

WHEREAS, the Austin-San Antonio Corridor's population has doubled over the last 20 years and is expected to double again over the next 20 years, and

WHEREAS, Interstate 35 has become the *de facto* NAFTA highway between the US, Mexico, and Canada, used by over one million trucks per year involved in international trade, and

WHEREAS, a study by the Federal Highway Administration in 1999 found that over the entire 1700-mile length of Interstate 35 from Mexico to Canada the highest vehicle counts, the most traffic fatalities, the worst congestion, the lowest levels of service, and the lowest average speed-per-mile were to be found in the Austin-San Antonio Corridor, and

WHEREAS, a freight rail line owned by Union Pacific directly parallels Interstate 35 through the most congested portion of the Austin-San Antonio Corridor and was constructed over 120 years ago and currently has nearly 200 at-grade crossings through the Corridor that represent congestion, public safety, and hazardous materials risks within heavily-populated areas of the Corridor, and

WHEREAS, freight rail car traffic through the Corridor has doubled since the passage of NAFTA, and

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation estimates that freight-movement trucking is increasing nationwide by 2% per year, increasing by 6% per year statewide, but increasing by 15% per year in the Austin-San Antonio Corridor, and

WHEREAS, many recent studies have shown that transporting goods by rail is more energy efficient than transporting goods by truck, and creates fewer air quality-eroding carbon emissions, and

WHEREAS, both Austin and San Antonio are in danger of becoming named as 'non-attainment' areas under the Federal air quality standards, and

WHEREAS, both Austin and San Antonio have endorsed local policies directed at reducing carbon emissions related to both air quality and global warming, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Texas has passed and the public has approved by election the constitutional amendment creating the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund, and

WHEREAS, \$200 million appropriated annually to the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund could be used to create a total bonded funding capacity for the Fund of at least \$2 billion over the next decade, and

WHEREAS, the annual appropriation to the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund should come from a source other than Fund 6 (gas tax revenues constitutionally dedicated to highways), and

WHEREAS, the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund could be used throughout the State to relieve traffic congestion, improve freight movement mobility, remove hazardous materials from the heavily-populated areas of urban Texas, and thus improve the economy and quality of life in Texas.

NOW BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail District respectfully requests that the State Legislature and the Governor of Texas appropriate \$200 million annually to the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund during the 2009 regular session and subsequent sessions of the Texas Legislature.



Sid Covington, Chairman, Board of Directors
Austin-San Antonio Intermunicipal Commuter Rail District

September 5, 2008