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1995 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 5

January 31, 1995 – Introduced by Senators Rude, Petak, C. Potter, Cowles, Darling, Plewa, Leean, Andrea, Chvala, Huelsman, Jauch, Breske, Clausing, Rosenzweig, George and Burke, cosponsored by Representatives Brandemuehl, R. Young, Porter, Hoven, Urban, Wirch, Turner, Krusick, Silbaugh, Ourada, Grobschmidt, Wasserman, Hasenohrl, Rutkowski, Ziegelbauer, Robson, Ladwig, Baldwin, Ainsworth, Hahn, Dobyns, Plache, Musser, Ott, R. Potter, Gunderson and Krug. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

Relating to: memorializing Congress to strengthen Amtrak.

Whereas, Amtrak is currently facing a \$200 million deficit and as a result has proposed reducing its service nationwide by 21% by April 1; and

Whereas, one of the reductions that has been proposed is eliminating the 6 daily commuter runs between Chicago and Milwaukee, which is a route taken by nearly 453,000 riders per year; and

Whereas, Governor Tommy Thompson, Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist and all of the members of the state's congressional delegation are strongly opposed to the proposed reduction, which would eliminate 86% of Wisconsin's rail passenger service; and

Whereas, Amtrak is energy efficient and environmentally beneficial, consuming about half the energy per passenger-mile as airlines and causing less pollution; and

Whereas, Amtrak provides mobility to citizens of many smaller communities that are poorly served by air and bus services, as well as to those senior citizens, disabled people, students and persons with medical conditions that prevent them from flying and who need trains as a travel option; and

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Whereas, on a passenger-mile basis, Amtrak is 9 times safer than driving and can operate even in severe weather conditions; and

Whereas, expansion of Amtrak service by using existing rail rights-of-way would cost less and use less land than new highways and airports and would further increase Amtrak's energy-efficiency advantage; and

Whereas, federal investment in Amtrak has declined during the last decade while it has increased for airports and highways; and

Whereas, Amtrak pays a fuel tax that airlines do not pay; and

Whereas, Amtrak workers and vendors pay more in taxes than the federal government invests in Amtrak; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the Assembly concurring, That the members of the Wisconsin Legislature urge the President of the United States and Congress to retain federal funding of Amtrak service affecting Wisconsin at its present level, excuse Amtrak from paying fuel taxes that airlines do not pay and include a strong Amtrak system in any plans for a National Transportation System; and, be it further Resolved, That the members of the Wisconsin Legislature support our Congressional delegation, Governor Tommy G. Thompson and Mayor John Norquist in seeking a fair resolution of the funding issues before Amtrak; and, be it further Resolved, That the senate chief clerk shall provide copies of this joint

Resolved, That the senate chief clerk shall provide copies of this joint resolution to each member of this state's congressional delegation and to President Clinton.

22 (END)