

2000-9
RESOLUTION URGING CONTINUED
FUNDING OF AMTRAK SERVICE

WHEREAS, the Clinton County Board of Commissioners is concerned about transportation issues in Clinton County, and

WHEREAS, since 1974, Amtrak passenger rail service through East Lansing as part of the International's route between Chicago and Toronto has been a valuable service to the residents of the Tri-County region, and to the tens of thousands of students who attend Michigan State University from throughout the United States and from around the world; and

WHEREAS, the Clinton County Board of Commissioners wishes to express its concern over the recent announcement by Amtrak that it intends to eliminate this service as early as May 31, 2000, as part of strategic efforts to comply with Congressional mandates for financial self-sufficiency by the end of federal fiscal year 2002; and

WHEREAS, the concerted economic development efforts in the Tri-County region all factor in the benefits of having passenger rail service available to the area for marketing, business retention, job development, and training resources, all of which could be severely hampered by these recent developments; and

WHEREAS, local officials have unanswered questions about the Michigan Department of Transportation's decision to eliminate required funding for this particular route compared to others in the state, including what the total cost savings to MDOT would be, and whether or not an analysis was ever undertaken to determine how the elimination of this major route would affect the state's overall transportation system; and

WHEREAS, although questions about current ridership have been raised, they do not address quality of life issues and other benefits that result from the International service through East Lansing, and ridership is only one element of a true cost/benefit analysis that would demonstrate the broader range of value that this service has provided for the past 26 years; and

WHEREAS, the ridership at the East Lansing station has stabilized in the range of 41,000 to 45,000 passengers during each of the last eight years, when data from both the Amtrak train and thruway connecting bus services are analyzed; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has required a \$2.9 million increase in state subsidy from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in order to continue the service and at the same time comply with its Congressional mandates; and

WHEREAS, the Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act of 1997 established a federal goal of a totally self-sufficient national passenger rail system, which provides access to all areas of the country and ties together existing corridors by the deadline imposed in the Act at the end of fiscal 2002, appears unrealistic at best, and is likely to result in arbitrary decision making concerning routes and service discontinuation at worst.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Clinton County Board of Commissioners stands with other community leaders in urging Governor John Engler and the Michigan Legislature to appropriate the amount of state subsidy needed to continue the much valued East Lansing Amtrak service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clinton County Board of Commissioners hereby encourages the Michigan delegation to the 106th session of the United States Congress to take the necessary steps to amend the Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act of 1997; specifically, to reconsider the goals and objectives of self-sufficiency in order that alternative options may be thoroughly reviewed and assessed before the decision to discontinue federal subsidies is effective.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Michigan Congressional delegation and representatives of the State Legislature and Governor's Office are also encouraged to meet with officials at Amtrak for the purpose of urging reconsideration of the decision to discontinue the intercity passenger rail service to East Lansing presently served by the International route which also includes stops in the cities of Durand, Flint, Lapeer and Port Huron.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to the Michigan Congressional delegation as well as to the Governor, State Legislature and the Director of the Michigan Department of Transportation and Amtrak.

STATE OF MICHIGAN
COUNTY OF CLINTON

I, DIANE ZUKER, Clerk of the County of Clinton do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the Clinton County Board of Commissioners at a regular meeting held May 30, 2000 and is on file in the records of this office.

Diane Zuker, County Clerk