

RESOLUTION 2009-85

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE STATE OF OHIO'S AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA) FEDERAL FUNDING REQUEST FOR OHIO'S 3C "QUICK START" PASSENGER RAIL PLAN

WHEREAS, Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" Passenger Rail Plan – connecting Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati as part of the nationally-prioritized Chicago Hub in President Obama's *Vision for High Speed Rail in America* – is a strong contender for federal funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA); and

WHEREAS, Ohioans are demanding safer and greener travel choices, as proven in a March 2009 Quinnipiac University statewide poll, which showed that 64% of Ohioans want passenger rail and that among Ohioans 18-35 years old, 73% support the 3C "Quick Start" plan; and

WHEREAS, nearly 6 million Ohioans live within 15 miles of the 3C Corridor, a federally-designated high speed rail corridor and one of the most densely-populated corridors in the U.S. without passenger rail service; and

WHEREAS, Ohio's "Quick State" plan would have initial conventional-speed service running as early as 2011, using the safest, most efficient and cost-effective route, generating jobs and economic development, and putting travel choice in reach of more than 60% of Ohio's population; and

WHEREAS, Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" Service would offer 3-4 trains running daily in each direction, traveling at 79 miles per hour, offering fares and travel times that are competitive with other forms of transportation along this 250-mile corridor, with times constantly improving as tracks are upgraded and freight coordination issues are resolved; and

WHEREAS, Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" plan buildings a foundation for economic competitiveness in some of our state's most economically-distressed cities, where these urban cores represent Ohio's centers of commerce, education and research, all of which can be better connected to a ready and mobile workforce with passenger rail; and

WHEREAS, train stations are magnets for real estate development, with land values around stations increasing as much as 30%, and station stops provide place-making opportunities by creating comfortable, well-connected, and memorable destinations, which leads to new opportunities for small business growth and vibrant urban cores that are able to attract and retain today's talented professionals; and

WHEREAS, Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" plan will bring new travel opportunities and promote economic development in cities along the rail line by creating jobs, promoting regional connectivity, and creating an infrastructure to help spur greener and safer transportation options, including light rail growth and other connectors, such as green buses and street cars; and

WHEREAS, Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" plan will augment Ohio's existing passenger rail service along the Chicago-Toledo-Cleveland-Pittsburgh and Chicago-Cincinnati corridors, which currently carry three of Amtrak's long-distance trains through Ohio but offer limited service, with trains departing and arriving in the middle of the night; and

WHEREAS, the State of Ohio is working with Amtrak to improve this limited service, which saw 121,019 Ohio riders in 2008, up nearly 10% from the prior year; and

WHEREAS, Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" plan will leverage new public-private partnership, such as Amtrak's annual investment of more than \$12.6 million for goods and services in Ohio, from more than a dozen Ohio companies, and Amtrak's direct employment of 56 Ohioans with total annual wages of more than \$3.9 million; and

WHEREAS, in addition to expanded passenger rail-related business growth, freight rail operations would benefit from Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" Passenger Rail Plan from increased relief at congested rail choke points, at a value of more than \$3 to \$6 billion in improved productivity; and

WHEREAS, Ohioans need greater travel choices and reliable mobility options, as evidenced by data in the U.S. Census showing nearly 8 percent of Ohio households without a motor vehicle, and 20-25 percent of households without cars in Cleveland, Dayton and Cincinnati, and showing that Ohioans age 65 years and older will account for over 16 percent of the total state population by the year 2015 and 20 percent by 2030; and

WHEREAS, a modern transportation system that includes passenger rail service enhances the quality of life for those in its proximity, revitalizes our cities and boosts the economic development and growth potential of a region; and

WHEREAS, future expansions of Ohio's passenger rail service, beyond start-up levels, may include establishing "local" and "express" train service, opening opportunities for more station stops and increased economic development potential at locations across the state; and

WHEREAS, fourteen other states with state-sponsored passenger rail service are already realizing the dramatic economic development potential and return on investment from passenger rail, such as the Downeaster Service which is expected to generate \$3.3 billion in construction investment and create 8,000 new jobs in Maine over the next two decades; and

WHEREAS, Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" plan must win federal dollars to go forward and the ORDC and ODOT will formally apply on October 2, 2009 for federal stimulus funding of up to \$400 million under the ARRA to invest in infrastructure improvements, station development and operating train sets to initiate service along the 3C Corridor.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Cuyahoga County, Ohio:

Section 1. That the GCRTA believes that a modern transportation system that includes passenger rail service will enhance the quality of life for those in its proximity, revitalize our cities and boost the economic development and growth potential of a region.

Section 2. That the GCRTA recognizes Ohio and the Nation are faced with an array of urgent economic, environmental and mobility challenges that require bold, effective action to be taken to implement strategic and essential investment in our rail transportation system.

Section 3. That the Members of the GCRTA Board of Trustees call for the strong support by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Rail Administration for the State of Ohio's stimulus funding request for Ohio's 3C "Quick Start" Passenger Rail Plan.

Adopted: September 15, 2009



President

Attest: 

CEO, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer