



# Western Mass Rail Coalition

[www.westernmassrail.org](http://www.westernmassrail.org)



**Date**            **March 3, 2020**

**To**                **Members of the Massachusetts House**

**From**            **Western Mass Rail Coalition**

**RE**                **H.4506 An Act Authorizing and Accelerating Transportation Investment  
Amendments that we would like you to support**

**REF**

H.4506 An Act Authorizing and Accelerating Transportation Investment

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/191/H4506/>

**SUMMARY**

The Western Mass Rail Coalition asks that you **support** the following amendments to H.4506:

**Amendment #54 Adding Boston to Albany New York rail service**

**Amendment #91 Housatonic Railroad**

**Amendment #125 Valley Flyer Rail Service**

**Amendment #374 Industrial Rail Access Program**

**Amendment #377 286K Rail**

**Amendment #456 North-West Rail Service**

**AMENDMENT DETAIL**

**Support for Amendment #54  
adding Boston to Albany New York rail service**

Mr. Barrett of North Adams moves to amend the bill in section 2E, in item 6622-2184, in line 182, by inserting after "service" the following: ", Boston to Albany, New York service"

177 6622-2184 For the purpose of implementing rail improvements pursuant to chapter  
178 161C of the General Laws; provided, that funds may be used for transportation planning, design,  
179 permitting and engineering, acquisition of interests in land, vehicle procurement, construction,  
180 construction of stations and right-of-way acquisition for rail projects, including Springfield to  
181 Worcester service, Boston to Cape Cod service and Pittsfield to New York City  
182 service, **Boston to Albany, New York service**.....\$175,000,000

**We support Rep. Barrett’s amendment** because it would provide the possibility for rail improvements, as defined above, to support a future extension of east-west passenger rail to Albany, New York. An extension of service to the Albany-Rensselaer, New York station would interconnect the our east-west rail service with New York State’s Empire Service rail corridor.

**Support for Amendment #91 to H4506  
Housatonic Railroad**

Mr. Pignatelli of Lenox moves to amend the bill in section 2, in item 6622-2184, in line 181, by inserting after “City” the following: “and Housatonic Railroad”.

177 6622-2184 For the purpose of implementing rail improvements pursuant to chapter  
178 161C of the General Laws; provided, that funds may be used for transportation planning, design,  
179 permitting and engineering, acquisition of interests in land, vehicle procurement, construction,  
180 construction of stations and right-of-way acquisition for rail projects, including Springfield to  
181 Worcester service, Boston to Cape Cod service and Pittsfield to New York City,  
**and Housatonic Railroad** service.....\$175,000,000

**We support Rep. Pignatelli’s amendment** because it would provide the possibility for rail improvements, as defined above, to support the state-owned rail corridor that is used by the Housatonic Railroad in Berkshire County.

**Amendment #125  
Valley Flyer Rail Service**

Representatives Sabadosa of Northampton, Mark of Peru, Vega of Holyoke and Blais of Sunderland move to amend the bill in Section 2E, in Item 6622-2184 by inserting after the word "supplies" (now after the word “service,”) the words “and converting the Valley Flyer Pilot Service to a permanent commuter rail service connecting the cities of Greenfield, Northampton, Holyoke, and Springfield.”

177 6622-2184 For the purpose of implementing rail improvements pursuant to chapter  
178 161C of the General Laws; provided, that funds may be used for transportation planning, design,  
179 permitting and engineering, acquisition of interests in land, vehicle procurement, construction,  
180 construction of stations and right-of-way acquisition for rail projects, including Springfield to  
181 Worcester service, Boston to Cape Cod service and Pittsfield to New York City  
182 service, **and converting the Valley Flyer Pilot Service to a permanent commuter rail service connecting the cities of Greenfield, Northampton, Holyoke, and Springfield** .....\$175,000,000

**We strongly support Rep. Sabadosa, Rep. Mark, and Rep. Blais’ amendment** to make the Valley Flyer a permanent commuter rail service along this corridor. This corridor is a “natural” extension for the successful CTDOT Hartford Line passenger rail service that today operates between New Haven, Connecticut and Springfield.

**Amendment #374**  
**Industrial Rail Access Program**

Ms. Ferrante of Gloucester moves to amend the bill in SECTION 2D by inserting in line-item 6621-2117 after the words, “industrial rail access program” the following:-- provided further, that not less than \$6 million per fiscal year shall be expended for said industrial rail access program and; provided further; that the department of transportation shall establish a rolling grant application process for said program that ensures applications decided within 90 days of receipt.”

6621-2117 For the purpose of implementing rail improvements pursuant to chapter 77 161C of the General Laws; provided, that funds may also be used for transportation planning, 78 design, permitting, acquisition of interests in land and engineering for rail projects, including the 79 industrial rail access program **provided further, that not less than \$6 million per fiscal year shall be expended for said industrial rail access program and; provided further; that the department of transportation shall establish a rolling grant application process for said program that ensures applications decided within 90 days of receipt;**

provided further, that the department may use funds from this 80 item for the costs of engineering and other services essential to these projects; provided, further, 81 that the department may use these funds for a particular project or use may be adjusted in order 82 to facilitate other projects, if any.....\$80,000,000

**We support Rep. Ferrante’s amendment** which would expand and improve the Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP). IRAP is a public/private partnership program that provides state incentive funding to increase freight rail usage in Massachusetts by making it easier for shippers/receivers to connect to the freight rail system and for railroads to attract and serve viable markets.

**Amendment #377 to H4506**  
**286K Rail**

Ms. Ferrante of Gloucester moves to amend the bill by adding at the end of SECTION 2D the following section:--  
“6622-XXXX. For a public-private partnership program, pursuant to chapter 161C of the General Laws, to implement mainline track improvements to accommodate 286,000-pound gross rail load capacity freight cars; provided further; that the department of transportation shall establish a rolling grant application process for said program that ensures applications are decided within 90 days of receipt and, provided further; that, for the purposes of funding said program, the department may identify and utilize federal funding .....\$20,000,000”

**We support Rep. Ferrante’s amendment** because it would provide the means for the Commonwealth to provide grants that would allow freight rail companies to upgrade their track structure to modern-day standards, which is the support for 286,000-pound gross rail load freight cars. We favor any steps that will make it possible to move more freight off the roads and on to the rail network.

**Amendment #456  
North-West Rail Service**

Representatives Mark of Peru, Barrett of North Adams, Blais of Sunderland, Carey of Easthampton, Domb of Amherst, Farley-Bouvier of Pittsfield, Pignatelli of Lenox, Sabadosa of Northampton, Vega of Holyoke, Whipps of Athol and Zlotnik of Gardner move to amend the bill in Section 2E in item 6622-2184 in lines 180 and 181 by striking the following words “Springfield to Worcester” and inserting in place thereof “Pittsfield to Springfield to Worcester”; and in said item in line 181 after the words “Cape Cod service” by inserting the following words “, Fitchburg to Greenfield to North Adams service”

177 6622-2184 For the purpose of implementing rail improvements pursuant to chapter  
178 161C of the General Laws; provided, that funds may be used for transportation planning, design,  
179 permitting and engineering, acquisition of interests in land, vehicle procurement, construction,  
180 construction of stations and right-of-way acquisition for rail projects, including ~~Springfield to  
Worcester~~ **Pittsfield to Springfield to Worcester** service, Boston to Cape Cod service, **Fitchburg  
to Greenfield to North Adams service** and Pittsfield to New York City  
service.....\$175,000,000

**We strongly support Rep. Mark, Rep. Barrett, Rep. Blais, Rep. Carey, Rep. Domb, Rep. Farley-Bouvier, Rep. Pignatelli, Rep. Sabadosa, Rep. Vega, Rep. Whipps, and Rep. Zlotnik’s amendment** because it would

- (a) provide the possibility for rail improvements, as defined above, to support a future East-West Rail Service that would include service along the corridor between Pittsfield and Springfield, as well as Springfield to Worcester; and
- (b) provide the possibility for rail improvements, as defined above, to support a future North Adams to Boston rail service along the existing northern tier rail corridor.

Respectfully,

The Western Mass Rail Coalition  
whose members are listed on the attached page

## **Western Mass Rail Coalition**

An association of rail advocacy groups working together  
to expand the use of passenger rail in Western Massachusetts.

[westernmassrail.org](http://westernmassrail.org)

### **Member Organizations**

Trains In The Valley

[trainsinthevalley.org](http://trainsinthevalley.org)

Contact: Ben Heckscher

[benheckscher@gmail.com](mailto:benheckscher@gmail.com)

The Train Campaign

[barringtoninstitute.org](http://barringtoninstitute.org)

Contact: Karen Christensen

[karen@barringtoninstitute.org](mailto:karen@barringtoninstitute.org)

Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop

[palmertrain.org](http://palmertrain.org)

Contact: Ben Hood

[palmertrain@gmail.com](mailto:palmertrain@gmail.com)

Chester Railway Station & Museum

[chesterrailwaystation.net](http://chesterrailwaystation.net)

Contact: Bob Daley

[rdchester@comcast.net](mailto:rdchester@comcast.net)