



Date March 3, 2021

To Members of the Western Mass State Delegation

From [The Western Mass Rail Coalition](#)

Subject Request for Cosponsorship of three bills supporting passenger rail service in Western Mass

With this letter we, the Western Mass Rail Coalition, respectfully ask that you consider cosponsoring the three (3) priority western Mass passenger rail bills listed in this letter.

We have reviewed each of these bills in detail. In addition to advancing regional passenger rail service, we believe the bills also serve — both individually and collectively — as key stepping stones that will help western Mass achieve the broader goal of connecting people of all means and ability to jobs, services, and opportunity through multiple modes of travel.

[\*\*HD.3335\*\*](#)

***An Act Relative to an Interstate Compact for Western MA Rail Service***

Presenters: Rep. Paul Mark and Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa

This bill would direct MassDOT to enter into a compact with the State of Connecticut regarding regular passenger rail service between Greenfield and New Haven along the existing MassDOT-owned rail corridor north of Springfield.

Such a service could be an extension of the existing and frequent CTDOT-managed Hartford Line service that currently operates between Springfield and New Haven.

The proposed service would allow for residents of the northern parts of western Mass to easily travel between points all along this corridor without needing to drive a personal vehicle.

[\*\*SD.2221\*\*](#)

***An Act to establish fast, frequent, and reliable passenger rail service between Pittsfield and Boston via Springfield***

Presenter: Sen. Eric Lesser

This bill would direct MassDOT to act on the recommendations that were outlined in the final report that was produced as part of the East-West Passenger Rail Study.

Specifically, MassDOT would be directed to evaluate and identify potential funding sources, and conduct an economic impact analysis of East-West rail service.

The bill would also direct MassDOT to take all necessary steps to establish East-West passenger rail service, between Pittsfield and Boston, via Springfield, by January 2022 with the help of the MBTA, or some other carrier, which we assume would be Amtrak.

We applaud Senator Lesser's bold proposal to move the discussion of East-West rail forward in a meaningful and productive way.

[HD.2405](#)

***An Act funding a study of passenger service on the Housatonic rail line***

Presenter: Rep. Smitty Pignatelli

This bill would direct MassDOT to convene a study group to be referred to as the Berkshire Passenger Rail Service Working Committee.

The working group would evaluate and issue a report on the economic and environmental benefits of establishing year-round multiple-trip-per-day passenger rail service between the city of Pittsfield and New York City using the MassDOT-owned Housatonic Rail line.

This bill would bring economic benefits to Berkshire County and it furthers the creation of a regional rail system, providing an important connection between western Mass and New York City.

Restoration of passenger rail service on the Housatonic rail line is listed as the top priority in the Berkshire County 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a long-range (25-year) document that provides the basis for future transportation investment and planning in the region.

With this letter we also wish to bring you your attention [SD.2315](#), ***An Act creating a New Deal for Transportation in the Commonwealth***, as presented by Sen. Boncore.

We find this important bill worthy of action in the 2021-22 session, subject to amendments to address the unique needs of the western four counties in the Commonwealth. As an example, the “Stimulus-Ready Projects” wording should be modified so that non-MBTA capital projects could also be prioritized for funding.

The bill takes a bold step into the future of transportation in our state by refocusing transportation on issues related to equity, environmental sustainability, and climate change, in particular:

- The expansion and modernization of the Commonwealth’s public transportation infrastructure and fleets
- The electrification of the Commonwealth's public transportation infrastructure and fleets
- Minimizing transportation costs for low and moderate income individuals and families
- Ensuring first- and last-mile connection to public transit.

Western Mass Rail Coalition Cosponsor Letter  
March 3, 2021

The Western Mass Rail Coalition, and its member organizations, advocate for the development, implementation, operation, sustainability and expansion of publicly-supported passenger rail services that benefit the residents of western Massachusetts.

Respectfully,

*The Western Mass Rail Coalition*

[The Western Mass Rail Coalition](#)

### **Member Organizations**

#### **[Trains In The Valley](#)**

An advocacy group focused on improved and expanded passenger and freight rail service in the Pioneer Valley region of western Massachusetts

#### **[The Train Campaign](#)**

A rail advocacy organization for Berkshire and Litchfield counties and the surrounding region, sharing a vision for passenger rail as the essential framework for efficient, sustainable transportation in the 21st century. The Train Campaign supports passenger rail initiatives including the East-West Rail Study, the Pownal line, the Berkshire Flyer, and the Housatonic Line.

#### **[Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop](#)**

An advocacy group working to restore passenger rail service to Palmer along the East-West passenger rail corridor

#### **[Chester Railway Station & Museum](#)**

Advocates working to restore daily rail passenger service to Western Mass