



Helena Citizens' Council (HCC)

**Recommendation to the Helena  
City Commission supporting the  
Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority**

**Date: August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**To: Mayor Wilmot Collins & Helena City Commissioners: Reed, Logan,  
Dean and Shirliff**

**Re: A Resolution of the Helena Citizens' Council to support passenger rail service  
through Helena, MT**

A recommendation of the Citizens' Council of Helena, Montana, in support of re-establishing passenger rail service through Helena connecting to other population centers of Montana.

**Whereas**, AMTRAK's Empire Builder is the number one long distance passenger train in the United States, and is greatly needed for the citizens of Montana's Hi-Line who do not have a great choice of public transportation in a large rural state like Montana; and

**Whereas**, AMTRAK discontinued service along its southern Hiawatha route in 1979, leaving only the Empire Builder to provide passenger rail service to Montana for the past 37 years; and

**Whereas**, Montanans living along the abandoned Hiawatha route must, as a consequence, drive for three to five hours to get to the nearest train station; and

**Whereas**, transportation to and from the major population centers of southern Montana would be greatly enhanced by passenger rail service; and

**Whereas**, improved passenger rail service connecting the major population centers of southern Montana to each other and perhaps beyond would constitute a boon to tourism and the economy of the region; and

**Whereas**, we are facing a critical problem with global warming and we need to greatly reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere; and

**Whereas**, Montana's southern Hiawatha rail route now by-passes Butte to include Helena;

**Now, therefore, be it resolved**, the Helena Citizens' Council hereby recommends to the Helena City Commission that they support any effort -- be it AMTRAK, government sponsored, or private -- to reestablish passenger rail service along the present BNSF/Montana Rail Link route connecting Helena with its sister cities across southern Montana. The Helena Citizens' Council further recommends a cooperative relationship with the freight railroads and passenger operations.

**Passed and adopted** this 24<sup>th</sup> day of the month of August, in the year of 2022 by a majority vote of the Helena Citizens' Council.

Cole Rosling, Chair  
Helena Citizens Council