

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Trains in Chicago and throughout the suburbs
3 have created a nuisance and public safety hazard to
4 residents; and

5 WHEREAS, Residents of the southwest side of Chicago and
6 the south suburbs have been particularly plagued by problems
7 of trains blocking intersections for long periods of time and
8 the loud noises of trains that are a nuisance near their
9 homes; and

10 WHEREAS, In the case of trains blocking intersections,
11 some residents, such as those in Blue Island, are cut off
12 from public safety services for long periods of time because
13 trains are blocking the only entryway into their
14 neighborhood; and

15 WHEREAS, In the case of loud noises of trains that are a
16 nuisance near their homes, some residents, such as those in
17 West Beverly, are subject to dangerously high train whistles
18 which exceed decibel limits and train rattles which crack the
19 foundations of their homes; and

20 WHEREAS, Congress has the authority to regulate train
21 horns and trains stalled in intersections and the authority
22 to pre-empt state and local governments in this area, but it
23 has delegated its authority to the Secretary of
24 Transportation; and

25 WHEREAS, The United States Code, Title 49, Section 20134,
26 gives the Secretary of Transportation the power to "develop
27 and carry out solutions to the railroad grade crossing
28 problem and measures to protect pedestrians in densely
29 populated areas along railroad rights of way"; and

30 WHEREAS, The United States Code, Title 49, Section
31 20153(e), specifically instructs the Secretary to "promote

1 the quiet of communities affected by rail operations" in
2 promulgating regulations, and the statute allows the
3 Secretary of Transportation to suspend the sounding of the
4 horn at railroad crossings if other, as effective, safety
5 means can be developed and demonstrated in the case of loud
6 noises of train that are a nuisance; and

7 WHEREAS, Section 20153(i) of Title 49 of the United
8 States Code instructs the Secretary to "work in partnership
9 with affected communities to provide technical assistance
10 and...a reasonable amount of time for the local communities
11 to install supplementary safety measures, taking into account
12 local safety initiatives (such as public awareness
13 initiatives and highway-rail grade crossing traffic law
14 enforcement programs)"; therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIRST GENERAL
16 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF
17 REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, That we petition the
18 United States Secretary of Transportation to invoke this
19 authority to prevent trains from blocking intersections,
20 because the blocking of intersections poses safety hazards to
21 residents and vehicles; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That we urge the United States Secretary of
23 Transportation to adopt regulations to protect residents from
24 the nuisance of train noise and not to allow trains to blow
25 their horns in "quiet zone" areas, and we urge the Secretary
26 to develop alternative safety measures to supplant the use of
27 the horn, such as helping to fund grade crossings and
28 footbridges; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the United States Secretary of
30 Transportation should convene soon a meeting of residents,
31 local elected officials, and the railroad to address these
32 concerns of residents of the southwest side of Chicago and

1 the south suburbs; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be sent to
3 the United States Secretary of Transportation and to each
4 member of the Illinois congressional delegation.