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Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation To Review the Fiscal Impact on the State of the Closure of the Railroad Track between Madawaska and Millinocket

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the owners of the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway have filed notice with the federal Surface Transportation Board that it may seek to abandon more than 240 miles of track serving Penobscot County and Aroostook County, from the Town of Millinocket to the Town of Madawaska and several eastward branches, including one toward the Town of Houlton; and

Whereas, these tracks are part of the historic line formerly known as the Bangor and Aroostook, and the loss of this rail line would be a major blow to the economy of not just northern Maine, but the entire State; and

Whereas, the Department of Transportation needs to immediately study and review the options and impact of a possible closing in time to submit emergency legislation; and

Whereas, the study must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to this legislative session; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1 Northern Maine railway study. Resolved: That the Department of Transportation shall review the possible fiscal impact to the State in the event the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway abandons more than 240 miles of track serving Penobscot County and Aroostook County, from the Town of Millinocket to the Town of Madawaska and several eastward branches, including one toward the Town of Houlton. In conducting this review, the department shall seek information from all interested parties in the matter of a rail closure and incorporate those responses into the report under section 2; and be it further

Sec. 2 Study responses reported. Resolved: That the Department of Transportation shall report its findings and recommendations under section 1, including suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation by March 1, 2010. The Joint Standing Committee on Transportation may introduce a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 124th Legislature to implement the recommendations on matters relating to the study.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

SP0650, LD 1678, item 1, 124th Maine State Legislature
Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation To Review the Fiscal Impact on
the State of the Closure of the Railroad Track between Madawaska and Millinocket

This resolve directs the Department of Transportation to review the fiscal impact upon the State of the proposed closure of railroad tracks between the Town of Madawaska and the Town of Millinocket and report its findings to the Second Regular Session of the 124th Legislature.