



CITY COUNCIL Agenda Item #19-116(I)

Date: April 10, 2019

Consent X Discussion ___

SUBJECT: Letter in support of section 34 of H.529 (Transportation Bill), Technical Analysis of Commuter Rail Service Utilizing Self-propelled Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) Rail Cars.

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: Mayor Watson

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve letter of support to Senate Transportation Committee and instruct Mayor Watson to sign.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME/PRIOR ACTION: Thoughtfully Planned Built Environment; Sustainable Infrastructure; Environmental Stewardship; Inclusive, Welcoming and Equitable Community; Community Prosperity

EXPENDITURE REQUIRED: N/A

SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS: N/A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: On March 26th, Vermont House of Representatives voted to pass a transportation bill. If passed in the Senate, part of the bill would instruct VTrans to conduct a technical analysis of a commuter rail system using self-propelled diesel multiple unit (DMU) rail cars that would serve the Burlington-St Albans and Burlington-Montpelier corridors. The City has previously reached out to the House in support of the bill and this letter would do the same to the Senate.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: Draft letter of support

INTERESTED PARTIES: City Council, residents, commuters

CITY MANAGER'S APPROVAL:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Hoffman".



America's Small Town Capital

Mayor Anne Watson

William Fraser
City Manager

City Council Members:

Dona Bate
Ashley Hill
Lauren Hierl
Conor Casey
Glen Coburn Hutcheson
Jack McCullough

Sue Allen
Assistant City Manager

April 10, 2019

Senate Transportation Committee
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Montpelier City Council, I write in strong support of Sec. 34 of H.529, the Transportation Bill. This section, Technical Analysis of Commuter Rail Service Utilizing Self-propelled Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) Rail Cars, represents a critical next step in understanding the viability of delivering passenger rail to Montpelier and our surrounding communities.

The City of Montpelier has been following this language closely, and reached out to express our support to the House Transportation Committee. We wish to reiterate our support to the Senate Transportation Committee, and to articulate our belief that this language could help create a pathway to a passenger rail system that could enormously benefit our community.

We believe that the creation of a community passenger rail network connecting Vermont's cities and towns through an integrated public transportation system would help us meet our goal of becoming carbon-neutral, or net zero, by 2030. Last year we applied for a grant to study implementation of passenger rail further. The construction of our new transit center creates opportunity for passenger rail to become a reality for our community.

In addition to our local net zero goals, the State's Comprehensive Energy Plan ("CEP") specifically recognizes passenger rail as a key component of a modern transportation energy future that will reduce the greenhouse gas impacts of the transportation sector.

The use of rail affords not only direct economic and environmental benefits, but facilitates economic development in communities through the presence of rail stops and stations, while attracting millennials, young families, and quality jobs to our community and Vermont.

Advances in communications and other technologies create ever-expanding opportunities to not only increase the efficiency of rail transportation, but to create an integrated transportation system that combines increased rail use with other efficient and environmentally responsible means of high-occupancy public and private methods of transportation.

Sincerely,

Anne Watson
Mayor