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ACR-51 Sesquicentennial Celebration of the First Transcontinental Railroad. (2019-2020)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 51

CHAPTER 73

Relative to the Sesquicentennial Celebration of the First Transcontinental Railroad.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 04, 2019.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 51, Levine. Sesquicentennial Celebration of the First Transcontinental Railroad.

This measure would proclaim that Friday, May 10, 2019, will be celebrated as the First Transcontinental Railroad's Sesquicentennial Day, and as California Railroad Day.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, May 10, 1869, saw the connection of California to the eastern railroads of the United States by the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad eastward from Sacramento, California, and the Union Pacific Railroad westward from Omaha, Nebraska, at Promontory Summit, Utah Territory; and

WHEREAS, The first transcontinental railroad was authorized by the United States House of Representatives on May 6, 1862, and by the United States Senate on June 20, 1862, and signed into law as the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 by President Abraham Lincoln on July 1 of that year; and

WHEREAS, The Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 authorized the creation of the Central Pacific Railroad Company and the Union Pacific Railroad Company to build the railroad from the Missouri River at Council Bluffs, Iowa, to Sacramento, California, and from Sacramento to the San Francisco Bay area, and authorized the federal government to issue bonds to finance the project; and

WHEREAS, The champion of the central route that followed the Oregon Trail from Nebraska was Theodore Judah, who undertook to survey a manageable route from the west over the Sierra Nevada Mountains through Clipper Gap in the County of Placer, California, Emigrant Gap, over Donner Pass, and south to Truckee, California, to reach the Great Basin and connect up with rail lines coming from the east, through what was one of the chief obstacles of a central route to California, the high and rugged Sierra Nevada Mountains; and

WHEREAS, Convinced that a properly financed railroad could pass from Sacramento through the Sierra Nevada Mountains, in 1856 Mr. Judah wrote a 13,000-word proposal in support of a Pacific railroad and distributed it to cabinet secretaries, congressmen, and other influential people; and

WHEREAS, In September 1859, Mr. Judah was chosen to be the accredited lobbyist for the Pacific Railroad Convention, which approved his plan to survey, finance, and engineer the proposed railroad; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Judah returned to Washington, D.C. in December 1859, where he received an audience with President James Buchanan and represented the convention before Congress; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Judah returned to California in 1860 and continued to survey and refine the proposed route through the Sierra Nevada Mountains suitable for a railroad, and together with local miner Daniel Strong, who had surveyed a route over the Sierra Nevada Mountains for a wagon toll road, formed an association to solicit subscriptions from local merchants and businessmen to support the proposed railroad; and

WHEREAS, Collis Huntington, a Sacramento hardware merchant, heard Mr. Judah's presentation about the railroad at the St. Charles Hotel in November 1860, invited Mr. Judah to his office to hear his proposal in detail, and persuaded Mr. Judah to accept financing from himself and four others: Mark Hopkins, his business partner; James Bailey, a jeweler; Leland Stanford, a grocer; and Charles Crocker, a dry goods merchant; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Huntington, Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Stanford, and Mr. Crocker invested \$1,500 each and formed a board of directors, becoming known as The Big Four, and their railroad was called the Central Pacific Railroad; and

WHEREAS, Six years after the groundbreaking, laborers of the Central Pacific Railroad from the west and the Union Pacific Railroad from the east met at Promontory Summit, Utah Territory, where on May 10, 1869, Leland Stanford drove the last spike, known as the golden spike, that joined the rails of the transcontinental railroad; travel from coast to coast was reduced from six months or more to just one week; and

WHEREAS, A great proportion of the work was carried out by Chinese laborers, using hand tools, wheelbarrows, and mule wagons; and

WHEREAS, In January 1864, the first known Chinese workers for the Central Pacific Railroad Company arrived and began to work; a crew of 21 men led by Foreman Ah Toy and headman Hung Wah cleared the Dutch Flat-Donner Lake Wagon Road; and

WHEREAS, In July 1865, the Central Pacific Railroad brought the first Chinese laborers from China, primarily from Guangdong Province; and

WHEREAS, By 1867, over 8,000 Chinese were employed on the railroad, enduring many hardships and casualties, including an unsuccessful strike for better pay and having to strike when the line was complete in order to be paid at all; and

WHEREAS, Completion of the first transcontinental railroad, linking the state of California to the eastern United States, led to a steady expansion of population, industry, and agriculture; and

WHEREAS, Improvements in refrigerated rail transportation led to California becoming the year-round salad bowl for the country; and

WHEREAS, The convenience and speed of rail transportation, linking New York's Broadway theater district to southern California, led to California becoming the premier center of entertainment and the creative visual arts; and

WHEREAS, Targeted marketing promotions created by the railroad companies led to a steady flow of emigration from the cold weather states to the Golden State, and other railroad marketing efforts developed California's tourism industry, starting with long winter excursions and later transitioning toward the growing middle class with two-week summer vacations; and

WHEREAS, This growth led to California becoming the sixth-largest economy in the world with the largest agricultural output of any state in the United States and an important manufacturing center; and

WHEREAS, The railroads, as a key partner in the container revolution, resulted in California's ports dominating international intermodal cargo flow; and

WHEREAS, California's rail lines and ports also facilitate the export of bulk agricultural and mineral traffic from both California and the rest of the United States; and

WHEREAS, This growth led to California being home to 40 million people, with a need to safely travel throughout the state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Californians have always used the rail system for their daily commute, and business, personal, and leisure travel; and

WHEREAS, The economic energy created by this travel for commuter, business, personal, and leisure travel created an innovative economy second to none; and

WHEREAS, Rail transportation being the most efficient form of transportation in terms of energy and land use, full usage and expansion of California's rail network will aid in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and in the effort to offset the impact of the warming atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, With an increasing population, an integrated, high-performance rail transportation system can be used as a tool to improve personal mobility, reduce the stress of daily travel, and efficiently move growing freight traffic without the need to dramatically expand the state's highway network; and

WHEREAS, California is once again a major manufacturer of locomotives and passenger railcars, and the railroads employ over 11,500 people, earning over \$1 billion in wages and benefits, with manufacturers, contractors, and suppliers employing an estimated 25,000 more employees; and

WHEREAS, The majority of railroad workers are represented by unions with a long history of service in the state; and

WHEREAS, The Rail Passenger Association of California (RailPAC) educates the public in California and the western United States about the historical significance, present impact, and future potential of passenger railroads; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature proclaims that Friday, May 10, 2019, will be celebrated as the First Transcontinental Railroad's Sesquicentennial Day, and as California Railroad Day; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the Governor, the Speaker of the Assembly, the President Pro Tem of the Senate, the Director of Transportation, and the author for appropriate distribution.