

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1012

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 6, 1996

The Senate Transportation Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 1012 with committee amendments.

This amended bill would require the New Jersey Transit Corporation to study the feasibility and cost of instituting rail passenger service from the township of Weehawken to the borough of Northvale, making use of existing rail freight lines or rights-of-way. The study would include, but not be limited to, an examination of the cost of using or modifying the existing rail freight lines or rights-of-way for both conventional and light rail passenger service, with particular reference to the Northern Running Track (commonly referred to as the "Northern Line" or "Northern Branch Line") and any intersecting or connecting lines, the feasibility and cost of entering into an agreement with Conrail, the location and costs of stations at the proposed intermediate stops, the impact on existing bus services and the projected costs and benefits of the proposed line compared with the costs and benefits of such bus services.

Conrail currently operates freight service to Northvale on the Northern Line, although a portion of this line is only used infrequently for freight service with one train running per day. The study would permit the examination of the cost of using the Northern Line for both conventional and light rail service, as well as using connecting or intersecting lines, such as the N.Y.S. and W.R.R. line, to institute rail passenger service from Weehawken to the northern border of New Jersey, with the potential of going to Rockland county in New York. The study is to be completed within six months of the bill becoming law.

The committee amended the bill to require the study to include the impact on existing bus services and the projected costs and benefits for the proposed line compared with the costs and benefits of such bus services.