Legislation Text

File #: 250880, **Version:** 0

Authorizing the Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities to hold hearings to investigate SEPTA Regional Rail's Silverliner IV fleet.

WHEREAS, The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) is the Delaware Valley's mass transit operator, running buses, subways, trolleys, and commuter rail lines since 1963 when it was created by the state legislature. SEPTA serves nearly four million residents in the five-county service area, as well as neighboring residents of Delaware and New Jersey, connecting to their regional transit systems; and

WHEREAS, SEPTA has been facing a budget crisis since 2024, as ridership recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and costs continue to increase, with a $213 million fiscal cliff approaching that has lead the agency to increase fares by an average of 21.5%. SEPTA was forced to gain approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to use up to $394 million in capital assistance funds for daily operations for two years due to the state budget impasse; and

WHEREAS, In October 2025, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) released an investigative report recommending its oldest train cars be discontinued from service. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) later issued Emergency Order No. 34 providing mitigation recommendations to SEPTA to take immediate action to address electrical fires on its Silverliner IVs; and

WHEREAS, The 225 Silverliner IV railcars are SEPTA's oldest railcars, in use since the mid-1970s after being acquired by the Reading Railroad, and are some of the oldest in operation in the country. They represent 57 percent of SEPTA's Regional Rail fleet, and run on every route; and

WHEREAS, Due to funding constraints that have prevented their replacement, SEPTA has had to keep them in service long beyond their recommended useful life. As a result, they frequently go in and out of service due to maintenance issues, and are notorious for periodically catching fire; and

WHEREAS, In response to the recommendations from the NTSB, SEPTA crews are performing enhanced safety inspections and removing rail cars from service proactively as needed. This has led to delays, overcrowding, and cancellations, leaving riders stranded on the platform and searching for alternative forms of transportation; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that the state determines a funding solution to SEPTA that includes capital investment in new railcars, and that the City of Philadelphia identify priorities for how to procure more safer, usable Regional Rail trains; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities is hereby authorized to hold hearings regarding SEPTA Regional Rail's Silverliner IV fleet