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Resolution # 07/2012-001
Sponsor – CA/USA

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CUSTOMS PRE-CLEARANCE FACILITY
AT MONTREAL’S CENTRAL STATION**

Whereas, the Council of State Governments’ Eastern Regional Conference (CSG/ERC) is comprised of the 11 Northeast states from Maine to Maryland, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and five eastern Canadian Provinces; and

Whereas, the economic links between Canada and the Northeastern States are vital to the economies of both regions; and

Whereas, expediting customs clearance is a critical step to enhancing and expanding passenger rail service between Eastern Canada and the Eastern U.S.; and

Whereas, more efficient passenger train service between Montreal and New York City will spur job creation and economic opportunities on both sides of the border; and

Whereas, customs clearance for passenger rail service between Montreal and New York City is cumbersome and time-consuming, and can cause significant travel delays due to the uncertainty in clearance processing times; and

Whereas, in December 2011, President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a joint declaration -- “Beyond the Border: A Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness”-- which articulates a shared approach to security in which both countries work together to address border threats while expediting lawful trade and travel; and

Whereas, one of the goals of the declaration is to improve and expand pre-inspection and pre-clearance initiatives, including negotiating a preclearance agreement for land, rail and marine modes by December 2012; and

Whereas, the States of Vermont and New York and the Province of Quebec are currently working on a plan with U.S. and Canadian officials and with Amtrak to establish a joint U.S. – Canadian clearance facility at Montreal’s Central Station to conduct the pre-clearance of passengers traveling to and from the U.S.; and

Whereas, construction of a new facility at Montreal's Central Station and preclearance authority would reduce trip times by at least an hour in each direction, improve the safety of border clearance operations and improve service reliability on New York State's Adirondack service; support Vermont's proposed re-instatement of service to Montreal and other services like night trains that could reach Boston and New York; and improve system connectivity between Amtrak and VIA Rail service supporting increased passenger rail travel;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the CSG/ERC urges U.S. officials to move quickly to reach an agreement with their Canadian counterparts on allowing pre-clearance security inspections for Amtrak trains to take place at Montreal's Central Station; and

Be It Further Resolved that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, the Minister of Public Safety of Canada, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities of Canada, the Minister of Transport of Ontario, the Minister of Transport of Quebec and the Premiers and Speakers of the Legislative Assemblies of the Eastern Canadian Provinces and the Governors of the Northeastern States.

Adopted July 22, 2012 at the CSG/ERC Annual Meeting and Policy Forum in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

