

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2281

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Commerce & Labor*

Title: An act relating to passenger train crew size.

Brief Description: Modifying requirements for crew size on passenger trains.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Prentice, R. Fisher, Vance, Forner, Heavey, G. Fisher, Roland, Winsley, Franklin, Paris, May, Mitchell and Leonard.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Commerce & Labor, January 31, 1992, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE & LABOR**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives Heavey, Chair; G. Cole, Vice Chair; Fuhrman, Ranking Minority Member; Lisk, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Franklin; Jones; R. King; O'Brien; Prentice; Vance; and Wilson.

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7117).

Background: State law prohibits any railroad company operating as a common carrier to run a passenger, mail, or express train of four or more cars with a crew of less than five persons in specified job classes.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The provisions are deleted that require passenger, mail, or express trains of four or more cars to have a crew consisting of at least five persons. New provisions are added that prohibit state regulatory agencies from preventing passenger train staffing in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements or national settlements of train crew size. If there is no collective bargaining agreement or settlement, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission may perform a safety review of a passenger train operating with less than two crew members. In those circumstances, the commission may order a train crew of two members.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill gives the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission authority to perform a safety review of a passenger train operating with less than two crew members when no collective bargaining agreement applies. In those circumstances, the commission may order a train crew of two members.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The regional transit plan for the Puget Sound area includes consideration of a commuter rail facility. However, there are numerous concerns that must be addressed first, including state law requirements for passenger train crews. New technology makes it possible to use fewer crew members than the law requires and still have a safe operation. This is an issue that should be worked out between management and labor. Safety issues will be reviewed before any agreement is reached on a commuter rail contract. Amendments are being discussed that will give the Utilities and Transportation Commission authority to review safety issues when no collective bargaining agreement applies.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: (In favor) Fred Jarrett, Metro; Dale Greenwood, Burlington Northern Railroad; Julie Rodwell, Metro; and Alan Scott, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission. (Support with amendment) Tom Retterath, United Transportation Union; and Dale Jeremiah, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.