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ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL 1617

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State of Washington

53rd Legislature

1993 Regular Session

By Representatives R. Fisher, Chandler, Schmidt, Eide, Johanson, J. Kohl, Kremen, Cothorn, Jacobsen, Brough, Pruitt, Thomas, R. Meyers, Miller, Shin, Karahalios, Locke, Finkbeiner, Ogden, Quall, Orr, Wineberry, Veloria, Wood, H. Myers, L. Johnson and Anderson

Read first time 02/03/93. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to high-speed ground transportation; creating new  
2 sections; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that major  
5 intercity transportation corridors in this state are becoming  
6 increasingly congested. In these corridors, population is expected to  
7 grow by nearly forty percent over the next twenty years, while  
8 employment will grow by nearly fifty percent. The estimated seventy-  
9 five percent increase in intercity travel demand must be accommodated  
10 to ensure state economic vitality and protect the state's quality of  
11 life.

12 The legislature finds that high-speed ground transportation offers  
13 a safer, more efficient, and environmentally responsible alternative to  
14 increasing highway capacity. High-speed ground transportation can  
15 complement and enhance existing air transportation systems. High-speed  
16 ground transportation can be compatible with growth management plans in  
17 counties and cities served by such a system. Further, high-speed  
18 ground transportation offers a reliable, all-weather service capable of  
19 significant energy savings over other intercity modes.

1        NEW SECTION.     **Sec. 2.**     The legislature finds that there is  
2 substantial public benefit to establishing a high-speed ground  
3 transportation program in this state. The program shall implement the  
4 recommendations of the high-speed ground transportation steering  
5 committee report dated October 15, 1992. The program shall be  
6 administered by the department of transportation in close cooperation  
7 with the utilities and transportation commission and affected cities  
8 and counties.

9        The high-speed ground transportation program shall have the  
10 following goals:

11        (1) Implement high-speed ground transportation service offering top  
12 speeds over 150 m.p.h. between Everett and Portland, Oregon by 2020.  
13 This would be accomplished by meeting the intermediate objectives of a  
14 maximum travel time between downtown Portland and downtown Seattle of  
15 two hours and thirty minutes by the year 2000 and maximum travel time  
16 of two hours by the year 2010;

17        (2) Implement high-speed ground transportation service offering top  
18 speeds over 150 m.p.h. between Everett and Vancouver, B.C. by 2025;

19        (3) Implement high-speed ground transportation service offering top  
20 speeds over 150 m.p.h. between Seattle and Spokane by 2030.

21        The department of transportation shall implement such projects as  
22 necessary to achieve these goals in accordance with the implementation  
23 plans identified in sections 3 and 4 of this act.

24        NEW SECTION.     **Sec. 3.**     The legislature finds it important to  
25 develop public support and awareness of the benefits of high-speed  
26 ground transportation by developing high-quality intercity passenger  
27 rail service as a first step. This high-quality intercity passenger  
28 rail service shall be developed through incremental upgrading of the  
29 existing service. The department of transportation shall develop a  
30 prioritized list of projects to improve existing passenger rail service  
31 and begin new passenger rail service, to include but not be limited to:

32        (1) Improvement of depots;

33        (2) Improved grade crossing protection or grade crossing  
34 elimination;

35        (3) Enhanced train signals to improve rail corridor capacity and  
36 increase train speeds;

37        (4) Revised track geometry or additional trackage to improve ride  
38 quality and increase train speeds; and

1 (5) Contract for new or improved service in accordance with federal  
2 requirements to improve service frequency.

3 Service enhancements and station improvements must be based on the  
4 extent to which local comprehensive plans contribute to the viability  
5 of intercity passenger rail service, including providing efficient  
6 connections with other transportation modes such as transit, intercity  
7 bus, and roadway networks. Before spending state moneys on these  
8 projects, the department of transportation shall seek federal, local,  
9 and private funding participation to the greatest extent possible.  
10 Funding priorities for station improvements must also be based on the  
11 level of local and private in-kind and cash contributions.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The legislature recognizes the need to plan  
13 for the high-speed ground transportation service set forth in section  
14 2 of this act. The department of transportation shall develop a long-  
15 range rail passenger plan through the conduct of long-range studies  
16 addressing, but not limited to, the following areas:

17 (1) Refined ridership estimates;

18 (2) Preliminary location and environmental analysis on new  
19 corridors;

20 (3) Detailed station location assessments in concert with affected  
21 local jurisdictions;

22 (4) Coordination with the air transportation commission on state-  
23 wide air transportation policy and its effects on high-speed ground  
24 transportation service; and

25 (5) Coordination with the governments of Oregon and British  
26 Columbia, when appropriate, on alignment, station location, and  
27 environmental analysis.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
29 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
30 state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take  
31 effect July 1, 1993.

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