
HOUSE BILL 1617

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; making an appropriation; providing an effective date; and
3 declaring an emergency.

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

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

13 The legislature finds that high-speed ground transportation offers
14 a safer, more efficient, and environmentally responsible alternative to
15 increasing highway capacity. High-speed ground transportation can
16 complement and enhance existing air transportation systems. High-speed
17 ground transportation can be compatible with growth management plans in
18 counties and cities served by such a system. Further, high-speed

1 ground transportation offers a reliable, all-weather service capable of
2 significant energy savings over other intercity modes.

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

11 The high-speed ground transportation program shall have the
12 following goals:

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

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

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

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

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

34 (1) Improvement of depots;

35 (2) Improved grade crossing protection or grade crossing
36 elimination;

1 (3) Enhanced train signals to improve rail corridor capacity and
2 increase train speeds;

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

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

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

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The legislature recognizes the need to plan
17 for the high-speed ground transportation service set forth in section
18 2 of this act. The department of transportation shall develop a long-
19 range rail passenger plan through the conduct of long-range studies
20 addressing, but not limited to, the following areas:

21 (1) Refined ridership estimates;

22 (2) Preliminary location and environmental analysis on new
23 corridors;

24 (3) Detailed station location assessments in concert with affected
25 local jurisdictions;

26 (4) Coordination with the air transportation commission on state-
27 wide air transportation policy and its effects on high-speed ground
28 transportation service; and

29 (5) Coordination with the governments of Oregon and British
30 Columbia, when appropriate, on alignment, station location, and
31 environmental analysis.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The sum of two million five hundred thousand
33 dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated to the
34 department of transportation from the transportation fund for the
35 fiscal biennium ending June 30, 1995, to implement the requirements of
36 section 4 of this act.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** This act is necessary for the immediate
2 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
3 state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take
4 effect July 1, 1993.

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