

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2072

As Passed House:

March 18, 2003

Title: An act relating to a state produce railcar pool.

Brief Description: Creating the Produce Railcar Pool.

Sponsors: By Representatives Hankins, Murray, Woods, Grant, Schoesler, Clements and Newhouse.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 3/10/03 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/18/03, 79-19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a railcar program within the Department of Transportation (DOT) for perishable commodities.
- Directs the DOT to work with stakeholders in implementing the program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Simpson, Vice Chair; Jarrett, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Armstrong, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Cooper, Dickerson, Flannigan, Hankins, Hatfield, Hudgins, Kristiansen, Lovick, Morris, Romero, Schindler, Shabro, Sullivan, Wallace, Wood and Woods.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Mielke and Nixon.

Staff: Jay Alexander (786-7339).

Background:

The transportation of agricultural products is accomplished by a variety of methods,

including truck and rail.

Summary of Bill:

Directs the DOT to develop and oversee a railcar program for Washington's perishable commodity industries, modeled after the existing Grain Train program. Railcars may be acquired by purchasing used or accepting donated refrigerated railcars. Program funding would be required at a level suitable to facilitate and coordinate the program and may be accepted from state, federal, and other public or private resources. A transportation management firm would be hired to manage the day-to-day operations of the cars, including monitoring location, coordinating distribution, and arranging repairs. The Essential Rail Assistance Account would be expanded to allow for improvements, not just maintenance, or essential rail service.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Additional capacity is needed in delivering agricultural goods to market. There is also a demand for Washington goods on the East Coast, and this provides a viable alternative to shipping by truck.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Hankins, prime sponsor; Charlie Brown, Washington State Potato Commission; and Paul Vander Stoep, Northwest Perishable Shippers Cooperative Association.