
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6679

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senator Haugen)

READ FIRST TIME 02/07/06.

1 AN ACT Relating to the jurisdiction of regulating train speeds; and
2 amending RCW 81.48.030 and 81.48.040.

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

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 81.48.030 and 1994 c 81 s 83 are each amended to read
5 as follows:

6 Except to the extent preempted by federal law, the right to fix and
7 regulate the speed of railway trains within the limits of any city or
8 town other than a first class city, and at grade crossings as defined
9 in RCW 81.53.010 where such grade crossings are outside the limits of
10 cities and towns, is vested exclusively in the commission: PROVIDED,
11 That RCW 81.48.030 and 81.48.040 shall not apply to street railways
12 which may be operating or hereafter operated within the limits of said
13 cities and towns.

14 **Sec. 2.** RCW 81.48.040 and 1994 c 81 s 84 are each amended to read
15 as follows:

16 (1) After due investigation, the commission shall make and issue an
17 order fixing and regulating the speed of railway trains within the
18 limits of cities and towns other than first class cities. Except to

1 the extent preempted by federal law, the speed limit to be fixed by the
2 commission shall be discretionary, and it may fix different rates of
3 speed for different cities and towns, which rates of speed shall be
4 commensurate with the hazard presented and the practical operation of
5 the trains. Except to the extent preempted by federal law, the
6 commission shall also fix and regulate the speed of railway trains at
7 grade crossings as defined in RCW 81.53.010 where such grade crossings
8 are outside the limits of cities and towns when in the judgment of the
9 commission the public safety so requires; such speed limit to be fixed
10 shall be discretionary with the commission and may be different for
11 different grade crossings and shall be commensurate with the hazard
12 presented and the practical operation of trains. The commission shall
13 have the right from time to time, as conditions change, to either
14 increase or decrease speed limits established under RCW 81.48.030 and
15 81.48.040.

16 (2) Any speed limit that the commission fixed by order prior to the
17 effective date of this act, but without making a finding permitted
18 under P.L. 91-458, Sec. 205 (49 U.S.C. Sec. 20106), has no force or
19 effect.

20 (3) Before increasing operating speeds, the railroad company,
21 government agency, or jurisdiction that owns or operates the railroad
22 must provide a sixty-day written notice to the commission and to either
23 the governing body of the city or town within which the limit applies
24 or the road authority that has control over the grade crossing at which
25 the limit applies. In the notice, the railroad company, government
26 agency, or jurisdiction must provide the existing timetable speed
27 limits and new passenger and freight speed limits, the milepost limits
28 where the speed increase is to occur, and the federal track class
29 standard to which the track will be maintained. At the end of sixty
30 days, the railroad company, government agency, or jurisdiction may
31 raise the speed limit unless the commission staff, after investigation,
32 finds that a lower limit is necessary to address local conditions
33 consistent with P.L. 91-458, Sec. 205 (49 U.S.C. Sec. 20106). In the
34 event of such a finding by the staff that is not agreed to by the
35 railroad company, government agency, or jurisdiction, the matter shall
36 be scheduled for a hearing before the commission. A railroad company,
37 government agency, or jurisdiction may provide no more than five

1 notices in any sixty-day period without the consent of the commission.
2 The railroad company, government agency, or jurisdiction and the
3 commission may extend the sixty-day period by mutual consent.

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