

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5299

As of February 21, 2007

Title: An act relating to the intervention authority of the department of transportation on railroad shipping matters.

Brief Description: Transferring the authority to intervene on behalf of railroad shippers to the department of transportation.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen and Swecker; by request of Utilities & Transportation Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/20/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Dory Nicpon (786-7321)

Background: The federal Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) was dissolved in 1995. Certain responsibilities formerly administered by the ICC have been transferred to the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB), including responsibility for rail abandonment proceedings, and regulation of rail rates and fares.

Summary of Bill: The authority of the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) to intervene in federal rail abandonment proceedings or rate discrimination cases is transferred to the Department of Transportation (DOT). References to the ICC are updated, and instead refer to the STB. The authority of the UTC to investigate all interstate common carriers rates and fares, and petition the Interstate Commerce Commission under the outdated Interstate Commerce Act is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This change conforms the statute to practice in that the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission relies heavily on the guidance of the Department of Transportation when intervening in federal rail proceedings. This bill would make the Department of Transportation the lead agency for such federal proceedings.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

CON: Rather than using taxpayer dollars to the detriment of railroad workers, the law should offer railroad workers greater input in rail related decisions.

Persons Testifying: PRO: David Danner, Chris Rose, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.

CON: Larry McKillip, United Transportation Union.