
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1837

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By House Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Reed, Doglio, Leavitt, Berry, Parshley, Farivar, Taylor, Ramel, Fitzgibbon, Zahn, Thomas, Macri, Bronoske, Barkis, Scott, Pollet, and Nance)

READ FIRST TIME 02/28/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing intercity passenger rail
2 improvement priorities; and adding a new section to chapter 47.79
3 RCW.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 47.79
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) The legislature recognizes that intercity passenger rail is
8 an integral part of the state's transportation system and is critical
9 to the state's ability to meet the climate, public health, equity,
10 and mobility goals of the state as it continues to experience growth.
11 The legislature finds that intercity passenger rail is a highly
12 efficient mode of transportation that connects small towns and major
13 urban centers, and that the improvement of intercity passenger rail
14 service through improvements to trip times, frequency, and
15 reliability can enhance local economies and increase mobility options
16 for Washington residents. Therefore, the legislature intends to
17 reemphasize the need to prioritize the improvement of intercity
18 passenger rail through data-driven analyses as it conducts project
19 development work, including for the federal corridor identification
20 and development program.

1 (2) The department shall prioritize the following target goals
2 for the Amtrak Cascades service, with a goal of being met by 2035:

3 (a) Service reliability: Increase on-time performance with a
4 minimum trip reliability goal of 88 percent on-time performance.

5 (b) Service frequencies: A minimum of 14 round trips per day
6 between Seattle and Portland and a minimum of five round trips per
7 day between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia.

8 (c) Speeds: Incrementally increase speeds to shorten travel
9 times, with a target of reaching two and one-half hour trip times
10 between Seattle and Portland and two and three-quarter hour trip
11 times between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia. The department
12 shall engage with host railroads and infrastructure owners on
13 increasing speeds beyond current maximum operating speeds and, if
14 necessary, identify the additional infrastructure that would be
15 needed to reach trip time targets.

16 (d) Improvements to first and last mile connections: Create
17 improved multimodal connectivity to other transportation options at
18 stations.

19 (e) Emission reductions: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in
20 accordance with chapter 70A.45 RCW.

21 (3) The department is required to prioritize the target goals set
22 in subsection (2) of this section as it conducts project development
23 work, including for the federal corridor identification and
24 development program and for work that may be done in the future as
25 part of the federal-state partnership for intercity passenger rail
26 grant program. Project development work carried out by the department
27 must include infrastructure investments and extensive coordination
28 with host railroads, and other service partners, as necessary to
29 achieve these target goals.

30 (4) (a) The department shall report to the transportation
31 committees of the legislature, as well as to the joint transportation
32 committee, annually on analyses conducted and progress made to
33 achieve the target goals in subsection (2) of this section, including
34 any information required to be disclosed under this subsection (4).

35 (b) (i) If the department finds that one or more of the target
36 goals set in subsection (2) of this section cannot be achieved due to
37 a constraint unless it is mitigated by the legislature or another
38 party, it must provide a full explanation of the constraint and
39 detail what is necessary to mitigate it as part of the annual
40 reporting requirement under (a) of this subsection.

1 (ii) If the department finds that one or more of the target goals
2 set in subsection (2) of this section cannot be achieved due to a
3 constraint that cannot be mitigated, even with assistance from the
4 legislature or another party, it must provide a detailed explanation
5 of the reasons it believes a target goal should be modified, either
6 temporarily or for the indefinite future, to accommodate the
7 identified unavoidable constraint as part of the annual reporting
8 requirement under (a) of this subsection.

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