
ENGROSSED 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 target goals in this
2 subsection for the Amtrak Cascades service, with a goal of meeting
3 them by 2035. The legislature recognizes that voluntary investments
4 by the government of Canada, crown corporations, provincial entities,
5 and Oregon state entities, will be required to achieve these target
6 goals outside of Washington state borders.

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

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

12 (c) Speeds: Incrementally increase speeds to shorten travel
13 times, with a target of reaching two hour and 45 minute trip times
14 between Seattle and Portland and three hour and 20 minute trip times
15 between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia. The department shall
16 engage with host railroads and infrastructure owners on increasing
17 speeds beyond current maximum operating speeds and, if necessary,
18 identify the additional infrastructure that would be needed to reach
19 trip time targets.

20 (d) Improvements to first and last mile connections: Create
21 improved multimodal connectivity to other transportation options at
22 stations.

23 (e) Emission reductions: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in
24 alignment with state goals.

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

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

39 (b)(i) If the department finds that one or more of the target
40 goals set in subsection (2) of this section cannot be achieved due to

1 a constraint unless it is mitigated by the legislature or another
2 party, it must provide a full explanation of the constraint and
3 detail what is necessary to mitigate it as part of the annual
4 reporting requirement under (a) of this subsection.

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

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