

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5371

As Passed Senate, March 17, 1999

Title: An act relating to intercity passenger rail service.

Brief Description: Developing intercity passenger rail service.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Horn, Haugen, Franklin, Costa and Kohl-Welles; by request of Department of Transportation.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/3/99, 2/9/99 [DP, DNP].
Passed Senate, 3/17/99, 35-13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Goings, Costa, Eide, Heavey, Horn, Jacobsen, Patterson, Prentice, Sellar, T. Sheldon and Shin.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton, Johnson and Sheahan.

Staff: Gene Baxstrom (786-7303)

Background: The Department of Transportation is granted a range of powers associated with developing and operating facilities for which it is responsible. These powers apply to highways, ferries and toll facilities, and airports and include the authority to acquire property, design and build facilities, and operate those facilities necessary to provide the modal service.

Statutory language which authorizes the intercity passenger rail program is more limited and provides broad directives for the department to implement a rail passenger program including station development, grade crossing improvements, track improvements, and contracting for services. It is not clear that existing statutes grant the department sufficient authority to engage in a partnership to improve the King Street Terminal in Seattle, or in other rail depot, parking, and maintenance facility projects.

Summary of Bill: Subject to legislative appropriation, the Department of Transportation is granted certain powers relative to real property used in association with the state intercity rail passenger program including, but not limited to depots, platforms, parking areas, and maintenance facilities.

These powers include: 1) acquiring such properties through purchase, lease, condemnation, or grant; and 2) constructing, improving, and operating such properties even if the real property is owned or controlled by another entity, provided that the expenditure of public

funds must be directly related to public benefit of the rail program and the public investment must be secured with the owners of real property through written contract. The department may also accept and utilize gifts, grants and donations for the public benefit.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Authority is granted to the DOT to move forward with partnerships to redevelop the King Street Station and the King Street maintenance yard.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Jacobsen (pro); Ken Uznanski, Department of Transportation (pro).