

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1717

C 338 L 09
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning a rail line over the Milwaukee Road corridor.

Sponsors: Representatives Clibborn, Armstrong, Wood, Warnick and Klippert.

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

Background:

In 1980 the Milwaukee Road railroad declared bankruptcy, sold some of its properties, and salvaged its track. In 1981 the Legislature appropriated \$3.5 million to purchase 213 miles of the railroad's right-of-way in eastern Washington.

The right-of-way owned by the state was eventually put under the management and control of three state agencies: the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

During the 1995 legislative interim, the Legislative Transportation Committee convened a Freight Rail and Freight Mobility Task Force to examine the Milwaukee Road corridor's potential for relieving freight congestion. The task force recommended resuming freight rail service over the portion of the former Milwaukee Road railroad running from Ellensburg to Lind.

Legislation in 1996 consolidated state-owned portions of the former Milwaukee Road railroad from Ellensburg to Lind into a single owner, the DOT. The DOT was charged with management and control of this corridor, and was authorized to negotiate a franchise agreement with a qualified rail carrier to operate service over the line.

The legislation creating the consolidated transportation corridor was scheduled to sunset if the DOT did not enter into a franchise agreement by July 1, 1999. Management of the trail between Ellensburg and Lind would remain with the three state agencies. In 1999 the Legislature extended the deadline for the DOT to enter into a franchise agreement to July 1, 2006. In 2006 the Legislature extended the deadline to July 1, 2009.

Summary:

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.

Portions of the rail line between Lind and Marengo are transferred to the DOT if a franchise agreement is entered into for a rail line over portions of the Milwaukee Road. The deadline for the DOT to enter into a franchise agreement for rail service between Ellensburg to Lind, and between Lind to Marengo, along the Milwaukee Road corridor is extended by ten years. If an agreement is not entered into by July 1, 2019, each segment of the transportation corridor will remain with its current ownership and management by the DOT, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the DNR.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0	
Senate	45	0	(Senate amended)
House	97	0	(House concurred)

Effective: June 30, 2009