

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1352

C 190 L 03

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Apportioning railroad crossing installation and maintenance costs.

Sponsors: By Representatives Murray, Ericksen and Romero; by request of Utilities & Transportation Commission.

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Highways & Transportation

Background:

In 1969 the Grade Crossing Protective Account (Account) was created to provide funds for projects such as improvements to signals and warning devices at public railroad crossings. The Account, administered by the Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission), would pay for 60 percent of a project, the local or state government would pay for 30 percent of the project, and the railroad would pay the remaining 10 percent. In the 1980s the federal government increased its funding of these types of projects and required only a 1 percent match, which was paid from the Account. The Commission has found that smaller towns and smaller railroads are not able to pay the 30 percent and 10 percent matches, respectively, to fund projects.

Many of the projects previously funded out of the Account receive federal funding to cover 100 percent of the costs. The majority of these projects are located at heavily traveled, public railroad crossings.

The Account received a one-time appropriation from the Motor Vehicle Fund and the only revenue generated is the interest earnings on the account.

Summary:

The purpose of the Account is broadened to include all rail safety projects that pose a high risk to public safety but are less likely to be funded by federal dollars. Types of projects include pedestrian safety, private crossings, and other rail safety hazards. The matching requirement for projects under \$20,000 is waived.

The Commission will transfer money from its Public Service Revolving Fund's Miscellaneous Fees and Penalties Account, if needed to fund a project.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 96 0
Senate 48 0

Effective: July 27, 2003