

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4003

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Brief Description: Requesting Congress to consider Washington for magnetic levitation transportation funding.

Sponsors: Representatives Ericksen, Kessler, Haler, O'Brien, Talcott, Chase, Dickerson and B. Sullivan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/23/05, 3/3/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requests federal funding for the State of Washington for magnetic levitation projects.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Woods, Ranking Minority Member; Skinner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Buck, Campbell, Curtis, Dickerson, Ericksen, Hankins, Hudgins, Jarrett, Kilmer, Lovick, Nixon, Rodne, Schindler, Sells, Shabro, Simpson, B. Sullivan, Takko, Upthegrove and Wood.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Wallace, Vice Chair; and Morris.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

Magnetic levitation (maglev) is a system in which magnetic force lifts, propels and guides a vehicle over a guideway at speeds of 250 to 300 miles per hour. The concept of magnetically levitated trains was first identified around 1900, but significant advancements in maglev technology did not occur until relatively recently. In December 2003, the first commercial maglev system was completed in China by the Transrapid Company, a joint venture of Siemens and Thyssen Krupp. It provides service between downtown Shanghai and its airport at 270 miles per hour along a 19-mile route. While Germany and Japan have spent significant amounts of time and money developing maglev technology over the last several decades,

comparatively little research was performed in the United States until the 1990s when the National Maglev Initiative was established.

To evaluate the potential for maglev to improve intercity transportation and to determine an appropriate role for the federal government, the "Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century" (TEA 21) was passed in 1998, which created a National Magnetic Levitation Technology Deployment Program. Funding consisted of \$55 million. The preconstruction planning was to identify a project that would receive up to \$950 million in authorizations for final engineering and construction of the guideway of the selected project. Applications were solicited from states or their designated authorities. Seven states received preconstruction planning grants. The United States Department of Transportation selected projects in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Baltimore, Maryland for additional study. The five remaining states of California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Nevada received \$1 million in federal funds to further develop their plans.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Requests that the United States Department of Transportation consider the State of Washington as a candidate for federal funding for the implementation of magnetic levitation projects.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Changes eight member task force to 10 member task force.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: Magnetic levitation technology is a workable solution to the transportation problems we face. It has very low maintenance and operation costs, and we need to ensure that it is part of the mix of options that we can use. We have the intellectual capability in Washington to make it work. It is already working in China, and is being considered in Colorado and Britain. It's happening around the world because it's a cost-effective, potentially self-supporting solution. The cost of construction varies from \$10-20 million per mile, and it could be placed in existing right-of-ways to replace trains and reduce the use of highways by both people and cargo. This is a technology for the 21st century, and it needs to be supported now.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Ericksen, prime sponsor; Representative Dickerson; Jo Klinski, Magna Force, Incorporated; and Mayor Rosemarie Ives, City of Redmond.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.