

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6527

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Extending the negotiation period for the Milwaukee Road trail.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Mulliken, Haugen and Sheldon; by request of Department of Transportation).

Senate Committee on Transportation

House 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 the right of way in eastern Washington.

The right of way owned by the state was eventually put under the management and control of three different state agencies: State Parks and Recreation Commission, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Department of Transportation (WSDOT). It was originally envisioned that the entire right of way would form a cross-state recreational trail.

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

In order to resume rail service, a unified transportation corridor was created. State-owned portions of land running from Ellensburg to Lind were consolidated into a single owner, WSDOT. The WSDOT was charged with management and control of the corridor, and was directed to negotiate a franchise agreement with a qualified rail carrier to operate service over the line.

Since the new transportation corridor would interfere with the cross-state trail use, the State Parks and Recreation Commission was directed to establish a "replacement trail" once the WSDOT entered into a franchise agreement for the provision of rail service in the new corridor.

If WSDOT does not enter into a franchise agreement by July 1, 2006, the legislation creating this consolidated transportation corridor sunsets, and management of the trail between Ellensburg and Lind reverts back to the three state agencies.

Summary: The deadline for WSDOT to enter into a franchise agreement for rail service over the Ellensburg to Lind portion of the old Milwaukee Road corridor is extended by three years.

If an agreement is not entered into by July 1, 2009, the transportation corridor between Ellensburg and Lind will revert to the prior ownership and management by the WSDOT, State Parks and Recreation Commission, and DNR.

The portion of the rail corridor between Lind and the Idaho border is transferred from WSDOT to the State Parks and Recreation Commission effect as of the effective date of the act.

The DNR is authorized to transfer management authority of the transportation corridor to the State Parks and Recreation Commission, upon mutual agreement of the agencies.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	46	0	
House	95	3	(House amended)
Senate	43	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 7, 2006