

RCW 47.76.200 Legislative findings. The legislature finds that a balanced multimodal transportation system is required to maintain the state's commitment to the growing mobility needs of its citizens and commerce. The state's freight rail system, including branch lines, mainlines, rail corridors, terminals, yards, and equipment, is an important element of this multimodal system. Washington's economy relies heavily upon the freight rail system to ensure movement of the state's agricultural, chemical, and natural resources and manufactured products to local, national, and international markets and thereby contributes to the economic vitality of the state.

Since 1970, Washington has lost over one-third of its rail miles to abandonment and bankruptcies. The combination of rail abandonments and rail system capacity constraints may alter the delivery to market of many commodities. In addition, the resultant motor vehicle freight traffic increases the burden on state highways and county roads. In many cases, the cost of maintaining and upgrading the state highways and county roads exceeds the cost of maintaining rail freight service. Thus, the economy of the state will be best served by a policy of maintaining and encouraging a healthy rail freight system by creating mechanisms that keep rail freight lines operating if the benefits of the service outweigh the cost.

Recognizing the implications of this trend for freight mobility and the state's economic future, the legislature finds that better freight rail planning, better cooperation to preserve rail lines, and increased financial assistance from the state are necessary to maintain and improve the freight rail system within the state. [1995 c 380 § 1; 1993 c 224 § 1; 1983 c 303 § 4. Formerly RCW 47.76.010.]