

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action:	Do Pass the A-Engrossed Measure
Vote:	5 - 0 - 1
Yeas:	Edwards, Monroe, Starr, Thomsen, Beyer
Nays:	0
Exc.:	Girod
Prepared By:	Patrick Brennan, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	4/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Authorizes Department of Transportation to enter into agreements with transportation departments in State of Washington and British Columbia with regard to Cascades Rail Corridor. Directs Department to submit biennial reports to Legislative Assembly on status of agreements and other issues related to corridor. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of joint management of corridor
- Importance of legislative oversight of corridor
- Increased ridership in corridor
- Impending loss of Amtrak funding
- Recent investments in corridor

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: The U.S. Department of Transportation designated the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor, also known as the Cascades Rail Corridor, as a high-speed passenger rail corridor in 1992. The corridor extends between Vancouver, British Columbia at its northernmost point to Eugene, Oregon at its southernmost point. Two years later, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) began contracting with Amtrak to provide daily round-trip passenger service between Eugene and Portland; a second daily round-trip train was added in 2000. Combined with Amtrak Thruway bus service, ridership totaled over 211,000 in 2012, an increase of nearly 250 percent since 1995. To accommodate ridership increases, ODOT has agreements in place to add an additional two passenger trains to the corridor in 2013.

Beginning later this year, the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) will end Amtrak's contribution to passenger rail service within the Cascades Rail Corridor. From that point on, federal law requires the states of Oregon and Washington to cover all operational and capital costs. House Bill 2918-A provides ODOT with the statutory authority to enter into agreements with the State of Washington, as well as with British Columbia, to maintain provision of passenger rail service within the corridor. The measure requires biennial reports to the Legislative Assembly on the status of these intergovernmental agreements, on performance of passenger rail service in the corridor and on the financial status of the corridor.