

REVENUE:

FISCAL:

SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO:

Action:

Vote:

Yeas:

Nays:

Exc.:

Prepared By: James LaBar, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 4/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Increases maximum rate of assessment paid by freight railroads operating in Oregon. Modifies standards for state safety oversight program for rail fixed guideway systems. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

(-2 *amendment*) Removes increase of maximum rate of assessment paid by freight railroads operating in Oregon. Clarifies modifications for standards for rail fixed guideway systems to align with recently published federal standards.

BACKGROUND: The movement of oil and coal by the nation's freight railroads has increased significantly during the past few years, resulting in public concern about rail safety. The federal government preempts state regulation of railroad operation, although it delegates some areas of responsibility, such as inspection of tracks and equipment, to the states. Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is responding by adding to its rail safety staff. The department defrays the cost of its railroad safety regulatory program by means of an assessment on railroads operating in Oregon.

There is also concern about the safe operation of public transportation by rail fixed guideway systems (trolleys, light rail and subways) across the nation. Congress responded to these concerns in 2012 in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) by expanding the scope and requirements placed on states for safety oversight of rail fixed guideway systems that receive federal funds through the Federal Transit Administration and are not subject to Federal Railroad Administration regulation.