

# **State Rail & Marine Office Proviso Reporting Multimodal Transportation**

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**Washington State Department of Transportation  
State Rail & Marine Office – Report for September 2012**

**Proviso:**

In ESHB 1175, Section 222, paragraph 4; (4) The department shall conduct a pilot program by partnering with the travel industry on the Amtrak Cascades service between Vancouver, British Columbia, and Seattle to test opportunities for increasing ridership, maximizing farebox recovery, and stimulating private investment. The pilot program must run from July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012. The department shall report on the results of the pilot program to the office of financial management and the legislature by September 30, 2012.

**Program Description**

WSDOT worked with Amtrak, the service-provider for the Amtrak Cascades, to pilot the use of special pricing for the Victoria Clipper between Vancouver, B.C. and Seattle. This special pricing gave the Victoria Clipper a discount across all pricing fare buckets. The details of the pricing are:

- Monday through Thursday – the Victoria Clipper purchases the Seattle - Vancouver, B.C., tickets at a flat \$30 fare compared to the rate of \$47- \$63 depending on availability.
- Friday through Sunday, the Victoria Clipper purchases the tickets at a 20% discount off the rack rate, which varies with availability.

**Financial Status**

The data below shows the performance of Victoria Clipper ticket sales of Amtrak Cascades seats during the pilot program:

July 2012	\$12,740
August 2011	\$11,787
September 2011	\$ 8,344
October 2011	\$ 6,958
November 2011	\$ 5,421
December 2011	\$ 4,717
January 2012	\$ 1,298
February 2012	\$ 2,300
March 2012	\$ 4,591
April 2012	\$ 6,816
May 2012	\$ 9,087
June 2012	\$10,759
Total:	\$84,818

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**Results and Next Steps**

Ticket sales were lower than anticipated. Ticketing and reservation efforts to accommodate the pilot program were higher than expected. This program was unique to Victoria Clipper and required a separate booking and management method within Amtrak. Victoria Clipper has recently requested a flat-rate to sell seats as part of tour packages on Amtrak Cascades. WSDOT will work with Amtrak and Victoria Clipper to determine benefits and costs of implementing a flat-rate program. Seat availability and associated revenue forecasts are currently being reviewed. WSDOT extended the pilot program for another year to perform this work.

**Considerations**

With a federal act (PRIIA 209) being implemented in October 2013, program costs will increase an estimated \$4.5 million per year. WSDOT will continue to evaluate partnerships to take advantage of opportunities that maximize revenue and reduce the need for subsidies.