Proposed Substitute House Bill 2092 (H-3310.3)

By Representative Reed

Original Bill:

- Establishes a Washington State Amtrak Cascades Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), to be composed of delegations appointed by county legislative authorities in counties in which a rail station on the Amtrak Cascades route is located.
- Mandates that the Rail Advisory Committee meet three times per year with representatives of the Rail, Freight, and Ports Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to review passenger rail concerns.
- Requires WSDOT to conduct of a review of community member input on the challenges experienced within the area served by the Amtrak Cascades route.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

- Strikes the underlying bill in its entirety.
- Requires WSDOT to convene a Washington State Amtrak Cascades Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee).
- Mandates that the Advisory Committee include providing information, advice, and recommendations to WSDOT, the Office of the Governor, and legislative transportation committee leadership on issues impacting passenger rail service.
- Requires the Advisory Committee to consider available grant opportunities to support passenger rail and update the public on progress towards achieving the target goals for Amtrak Cascades service established in state law.
- Mandates the following advisory committee membership: a representative from WSDOT, the Utilities and Transportation Committee, the Office of the Governor, a transit agency, a regional transit authority, the Association of Washington Cities, the Washington State Association of Counties, a tribal government, BNSF, Amtrak, and a rail labor organization; two representatives from disability advocacy organizations; four representatives from passenger rail advocacy groups; and six members who are riders of the Amtrak Cascades service and apply for appointment.
- Requires appointments of non-voting ex officio members to serve in an advisory role to the Advisory Committee from each of the two largest caucuses of each chamber.
- Sets rail advisory committee member term length to three years and grants WSDOT the authority to stagger initial term lengths.
- Requires the Advisory Committee to meet at least quarterly and convene by January 2027.
- Requires WSDOT to provide at least 30 days' notice prior to a meeting of the Advisory Committee.
- Mandates that WSDOT provide an annual report to the Governor, the Transportation Committees of the Legislature, and the Joint Transportation Committee detailing the activities of the Advisory Committee, recommendations, and other viewpoints of advisory committee members.

Committee: House Transportation Committee

Staff: Jennifer Harris (786-7143)
Office of Program Research

BILL REQUEST - CODE REVISER'S OFFICE

BILL REQ. #: H-3310.3/26 3rd draft

ATTY/TYPIST: AI:eab

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Establishing a passenger rail advisory committee.

AN ACT Relating to establishing a passenger rail advisory committee; and adding a new section to chapter 47.79 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 47.79 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department must convene a Washington state Amtrak Cascades passenger rail advisory committee. The scope of the committee's activities must include providing information, advice, and recommendations to the department, the office of the governor, and legislative transportation committee leadership on issues impacting passenger rail service, including performance improvements on passenger rail routes, station location and improvements, passenger train on-time performance, multimodal connectivity, and policy initiatives related to intercity passenger rail to benefit the public, communities served by passenger rail, and the environment. As part of this work, the committee shall consider available grant opportunities to support passenger rail and update the public on progress toward achieving the target goals for Amtrak Cascades service established in RCW 47.79.160.

(2) Membership of the passenger rail advisory committee shall include:

(a) One representative of the department;

(b) One representative of the utilities and transportation commission;

(c) One representative of the office of the governor;

(d) One representative of a transit agency;

(e) One representative of a regional transit authority;

(f) Four representatives of passenger rail advocacy groups;

(g) Six members who are riders of the Amtrak Cascades service, apply for appointment, and are selected by the department;

(h) Two representatives of disability advocacy organizations;

(i) One representative from the association of Washington cities;

(j) One representative from the Washington state association of counties;

(k) One representative of a tribal government;

(l) One representative of BNSF;

(m) One representative of Amtrak;

(n) One representative of a rail labor organization;

(o) One nonvoting ex officio member, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, serving in an advisory role from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives; and

(p) One nonvoting ex officio member, appointed by the president of the senate, serving in an advisory role from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

(3) Passenger rail advisory committee members are appointed to serve three-year terms. The department may modify initial terms served to stagger the terms of the appointed members.

(4) The passenger rail advisory committee shall annually elect a chair and other officers from its membership as it deems appropriate.

(5) The passenger rail advisory committee must meet at least quarterly, and shall initially convene no later than January of 2027. The passenger rail advisory committee must be convened at the call of the director of the department, or the director's designee, with notice provided at least 30 days prior to a meeting of the passenger rail advisory committee.

(6) Members shall serve without compensation, with the exception of any member qualifying for a stipend under RCW 43.03.220(2), but are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(7) Beginning December 1, 2027, the department must provide an annual report to the governor, the transportation committees of the

legislature, and the joint transportation committee, detailing the activities of the passenger rail advisory committee and its recommendations, as well as passenger rail advisory committee member viewpoints not otherwise captured in its recommendations.

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