

SB 14 -2, -3 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

Prepared By: Patrick Brennan, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/28, 5/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Department of Transportation to study options for restoring passenger rail service in Oregon between Portland and Ontario. Requires Department to submit findings of the study to the Legislative Assembly's interim transportation committees by September 15, 2024.

NOTE - LFO requests that the measure be referred to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Current passenger rail service compared to past service
- Potential to restore passenger rail service to eastern Oregon
- Shared passenger and freight service on same rail lines

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 Replaces original measure. Directs Department of Transportation (ODOT) to study options for expanding passenger rail service in Oregon and to submit report to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to transportation no later than September 15, 2024. Directs ODOT to work with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and other public bodies as appropriate, to develop a shared regional approach to Cascades passenger rail planning, funding and communication. Permits ODOT to enter into agreements with WSDOT to coordinate shared plans. Directs ODOT to submit biennial report to Legislative Assembly on the status of the shared regional approach, passenger rail performance in the corridor, and financial status of the corridor. Authorizes ODOT to enter into agreements with other jurisdictions related to mutual planning for improved passenger rail service, including ultra-high-speed ground transportation within the Cascades Rail Corridor and specifies that any agreements must include providing passenger service to Eugene. Limits biennial expenditure on on ultra-high-speed service development to the lesser of 50 percent of moneys available to Department for passenger service or \$1 million. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

FIS: Fiscal impact statement issued on measure w/the -2 amendment

RIS: No revenue impact on measure w/the -2 amendment

-3 Replaces original measure. Directs Department of Transportation (ODOT) to study options for expanding passenger rail service in Oregon and to submit report to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to transportation no later than September 15, 2024. Authorizes ODOT to enter into agreements with other jurisdictions related to mutual planning for improved passenger rail service, including ultra-high-speed ground transportation within the Cascades Rail Corridor and specifies that any agreements must include providing passenger service to Eugene. Limits biennial expenditure on on ultra-high-speed service development to the lesser of 50 percent of moneys available to Department for passenger service or \$1 million. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

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BACKGROUND:

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Oregon currently receives passenger rail service from Amtrak via three routes: the Amtrak *Cascades* provides service from Seattle, Washington to Eugene, Oregon; the Amtrak *Coast Starlight* traverses the entire north-south span of Oregon, connecting Seattle and Los Angeles, California; and the Amtrak Empire Builder provides service from Portland to Chicago, Illinois, though Portland is the only stop within the State of Oregon.

A now-defunct Amtrak route, known as Amtrak *Pioneer*, operated from 1977 to 1997. The route connected Seattle to Portland, then traversed the Columbia River Gorge on the Oregon side to Pendleton, before turning south to Ontario and into Idaho, eventually turning south at Pocatello and terminating in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Senate Bill 14 directs the Oregon Department of Transportation to study to explore options for restoring passenger service from Portland to Ontario along the route formerly traversed by the Amtrak *Pioneer*.