

Enabling Language:

SEC. **xxxxxx**. GREATER NORTHWEST PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE WORKING GROUP.

- (a) In General.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation (Secretary) shall convene a working group on enhancing intercity and interstate rail passenger service in the Greater Northwest region, defined as the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and portions of Minnesota and Wisconsin serviced by the Empire Builder. Potential routes within the region include but are not limited to between Chicago, IL and Portland, OR/Seattle, WA through southern Montana; Denver, CO and Billings, MT, and points beyond; Salt Lake City, UT and Butte, MT, and points beyond; Salt Lake City, UT to Portland, OR; and interconnections among such routes. The routes to be considered should link and serve in common communities, large and small, across the states comprising the Greater Northwest region, furthering economic and social wellbeing of rural America while providing enhanced connectivity for the national long-distance passenger rail system.
- (b) Membership.—The working group convened pursuant to subsection (a) shall consist of representatives of—
- (1) the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), which shall serve as chair of the working group;
 - (2) Amtrak;
 - (3) the States along the proposed route or routes;
 - (4) regional transportation planning organizations and metropolitan planning organizations, municipalities, and communities along the proposed route or routes, which shall be selected by the Secretary;
 - (5) the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority;
 - (6) tribal nations;
 - (7) railroad carriers whose tracks may be used for such service; and
 - (8) other entities determined appropriate by the Secretary, which may include other railroad carriers that express an interest in Greater Northwest service or passenger rail advocacy organizations.
- (c) Responsibilities.—The working group shall—
- (1) advise the Secretary on the optimal means of implementing the restoration or expansion of intercity passenger rail service in the Greater Northwest region funded by the 117th Congress, including but not limited to restoration of the North Coast Hiawatha and Pioneer routes, with the purpose of optimizing the quality and ridership of such service;
 - (2) develop recommendations for how the FRA and Amtrak can work with local communities and organizations to develop activities and programs to continuously improve public use of intercity rail service in the Greater Northwest region; including multi-modal connection recommendations to the suggested rail services.
 - (3) beyond existing services and the restored or expanded service funded by the 117th Congress, identify and evaluate all feasible options for restoring and expanding intercity rail passenger rail service in the Greater Northwest region. These additional options for restored or expanded service may include appropriate connections with relevant destinations beyond the Greater Northwest region.

- (2) select preferred options for restoring or expanding such service;
- (3) develop a prioritized inventory of capital projects and other actions required to restore such service and cost estimates for such projects or actions; and
- (4) identify Federal and non-Federal funding sources required to restore such service, including options for entering into public-private partnerships to restore or expand such service.

(d) Report.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the working group shall submit a service development plan(s) to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives that Includes—

- (1) the preferred options selected under subsection (c) (2) and the reasons for selecting such option;
- (2) the information described in subsection (c) (3);
- (3) the funding sources identified under subsection (c) (4);
- (4) the costs and benefits of restoring intercity rail passenger transportation in the region; and
- (5) any other information the working group determines appropriate.

(e) Funding.—From funds made available under section **xxxxxx**, the Secretary shall provide—

- (1) financial assistance to the working group to perform requested independent technical analysis of issues before the working group; and
- (2) administrative expenses that the Secretary determines necessary.

Funding language:

The Greater Northwest Working Group.—Of the total amount made available to the Office of the Secretary of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration, for fiscal year 2022, \$7,000,000 shall be used to convene the Greater Northwest Passenger Rail Service Working Group established under section **xxxxxx** of this Act and carry out its responsibilities under such section.