

Members

Sen. Thomas Wyss, Co-Chairperson
Sen. James Merritt
Sen. Vaneta Becker
Sen. Phil Boots
Sen. Michael Delph
Sen. Allen Paul
Sen. Ed Charbonneau
Sen. Vi Simpson
Sen. Earline Rogers
Sen. James Lewis
Sen. Jean Breaux
Rep. Terri Austin, Co-Chairperson
Rep. David Niezgodski
Rep. Robert Bischoff
Rep. Sandra Blanton
Rep. Nancy Dembowski
Rep. Phil Pflum
Rep. Vern Tincher
Rep. Cleo Duncan
Rep. William Davis
Rep. Thomas Saunders
Rep. Ed Soliday
Rep. Heath VanNatter



JOINT STUDY COMMITTEE ON MASS TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 28, 2008
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., the House Chambers
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Sen. Thomas Wyss, Co-Chairperson; Sen. James Merritt; Sen. Phil Boots; Sen. Michael Delph; Sen. Allen Paul; Sen. Vi Simpson; Sen. James Lewis; Rep. Terri Austin, Co-Chairperson; Rep. David Niezgodski; Rep. Robert Bischoff; Rep. Nancy Dembowski; Rep. Phil Pflum; Rep. Vern Tincher; Rep. Cleo Duncan; Rep. Thomas Saunders; Rep. Heath VanNatter.

Members Absent: Sen. Vaneta Becker; Sen. Ed Charbonneau; Sen. Earline Rogers; Sen. Jean Breaux; Rep. Sandra Blanton; Rep. William Davis; Rep. Ed Soliday.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

I. Call to Order

Representative Austin called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m. and the committee members introduced themselves.

II. Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission

State Representative Charlie Schlottach (R-Missouri), chairman of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC), discussed Missouri's \$5 million investment in passenger rail and the resulting increase in rail ridership. See Exhibits A and B. Representative Schlottach stated that the 11 member states of MIPRC work together at the federal level to pass intercity passenger rail legislation, such as H.R. 2095.

Representative Austin asked Representative Schlottach how member states other than Missouri are participating in MIPRC. Representative Schlottach answered that other states are conducting meetings and auditing their existing transportation plans. Representative Bischoff asked how many states are members of MIPRC and what is MIPRC's annual budget. Representative Schlottach responded that the annual budget is \$150,000 and listed the member states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

III. Amtrak

Derrick James, senior government affairs officer for Amtrak, reported that Amtrak recorded its sixth straight year of increased ridership, with almost 29 million passengers in fiscal year 2008. See Exhibits C and D. Mr. James stated that Amtrak has partnered with fourteen states to provide additional passenger rail service and hopes to develop such a relationship with Indiana. Mr. James discussed H.R. 2095, which authorized \$1.9 billion in matching dollars to the states for rail infrastructure investments, and recommended that Indiana use the MIPRC model to leverage the federal dollars. Mr. James also provided two Amtrak publications, Critical Link 2007 and Amtrak's System Timetable Fall 2008 - Winter 2009, to the committee for inclusion in its records. See Exhibits E and F.

Senator Wyss asked whether Amtrak fare revenue is sufficient to cover operational costs. Mr. James answered that it depends on the route but, as a general matter, 75% of costs are covered by fare revenue and 25% are subsidized by government dollars. Representative Austin inquired about the service Amtrak currently provides in Indiana. Mr. James responded that Amtrak runs two lines in Indiana: The Cardinal, which runs daily from Chicago to Indianapolis, and the Hoosier State, which runs twice daily across Indiana's northern border. Mr. James reported that Indiana ridership increased from 108,000 in fiscal year 2007 to 125,000 in fiscal year 2008. Senator Boots asked whether rail lines around the world are shared between freight and passenger routes like they are in the United States. Mr. James explained that while Europe promotes passenger routes more aggressively, the local routes are still shared between freight and passenger trains.

IV. Overview of Indiana's Statutory Transportation Funds and Entities

Sarah Freeman, staff attorney for the committee, presented an overview of Indiana's statutory transportation-related entities and funds. See Exhibit G. Jim Sperlik, fiscal analyst for the committee, provided two handouts concerning the distribution of the motor vehicle highway fund and Indiana's apportionment of federal funds for fiscal year 2009. See Exhibits H and I.

V. Public Testimony

Christine Glaser, Peak Oil Task Force of the City of Bloomington, testified in support of mass transit connectors between Bloomington and Indianapolis. Liz Solberg urged the committee to take advantage of additional federal funding for intercity passenger rail service and to encourage the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to take a leadership role in the development of mass transit. See Exhibit J.

Joe Krause, Indiana High Speed Rail Association, encouraged the committee to do more to support public transportation in Indiana and provided the committee with several pieces of information concerning Amtrak ridership and availability in Indiana and the midwest. See Exhibits K, L, M, and N. Bill Verdeyen, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, testified in support of a dedicated system for high speed passenger rail because it would create jobs in Indiana but would not slow down existing freight routes.

Tim Maloney of the Hoosier Environmental Council distributed a copy of the American Public Transportation Association's quarterly transit ridership report to committee members and urged the General Assembly to increase its investment in passenger rail and transit . See Exhibit O. David Drasin spoke in favor of developing and improving Indiana's rail infrastructure. See Exhibit P. Ted Wetekamp stated his support for adopting the transportation plans developed by MIPRC and emphasized the positive economic impact that high speed rail would have on Indiana. The committee also received a letter from W. Mike Weber in support of the development of rail travel in Indiana. See Exhibit Q.

VI. Committee Discussion

Two handouts prepared on behalf of the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors concerning mass transportation in central Indiana were distributed to committee members. See Exhibits R and S. Representative Duncan stated her support for increasing Indiana's participation in high speed rail development. Representative Austin and Senator Wyss questioned the absence of INDOT representatives from the meeting and stated their desire to learn about INDOT's plan for rail development in Indiana and the role Indiana should play in the MIPRC. Representative Austin adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.