

Resolution # TC-15-9-6

43 CRS 1-1303 (2) Report to the TLRC for Prioritization of Railroad Corridors for Acquisition, Use & Preservation

Approved by the Transportation Commission on Sept. 17, 2015

WHEREAS, the abandonment of rail lines in Colorado is considered to be of statewide importance because of the impacts these abandonments may have on local communities as well as the "market", including shippers, receivers and consumers; and

WHEREAS, the Transportation Commission of Colorado has been given statutory responsibility by the State for approving the acquisition of rail lines or railroad right-of-way under 43 C.R.S. 1-1303(2); and

WHEREAS, the Colorado Department of Transportation (Department) has identified a list of criteria for prioritization of rail corridors for preservation in a Rail Corridor Preservation Policy, PD 1607, dated August 22, 2014; and

WHEREAS, preliminary analysis has been performed by Department staff to determine which rail lines are in jeopardy of being lost due to potential abandonment; and

WHEREAS, the Department has responded to the provisions set forth in Senate Bill 09-094 by establishing the Division of Transit and Rail which shall, in coordination with other transit and rail providers, plan, promote, and implement investments in transit and rail services statewide; and

WHEREAS, the Department, in conjunction with other interested parties, is in the process of updating a State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, and has completed the Colorado Interregional Connectivity Study (ICS) and an Advanced Guideway Feasibility Study (AGS), and completed the North I-25 Commuter Rail plan update as a means of better planning passenger and freight rail improvements into the future; and

WHEREAS, C.R.S. 43-1-1303(3) requires the Executive Director of Colorado Department of Transportation to submit a prioritized list of proposed railroad acquisitions and their proposed uses to the Transportation Legislative Review Committee; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Transit and Rail has examined rail lines that meet the preservation criteria that have been abandoned, or have been proposed to be abandoned, during the past year and determined that none were Rail Corridors of Statewide Significance; and

WHEREAS, there are no rail lines of statewide significance that are at immediate risk of abandonment and in need of acquisition; and

WHEREAS, the Transportation Commission wishes to keep the TLRC informed of rail activities that could impact rail service in the State.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Executive Director is hereby directed to submit the following list of recommendations to the Transportation Legislation Review Committee:

The **first priority** is to monitor the status of the Raton Pass line (re: Amtrak Southwest Chief) and to participate in the Southwest Chief Commission. Recent history suggests risk of the New Mexico segment being abandoned, but not the Colorado segment.

The **second priority** is to monitor the status of the Tennessee Pass line. While there is no indication that the UP will abandon this line in the near future, the line has not been used for over 15 years. If this line is abandoned, the State should purchase it to preserve it for freight service in the future.

Herman F. Stockinger III
Herman Stockinger, Secretary
Transportation Commission of Colorado

9-21-15
Date