

Resolution Number TC-1771

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 and the rest of the transportation system; 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 C.R.S. 43-1- 1303(2); and

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

WHEREAS, the Division of Transportation Development has identified a list of criteria for prioritization of rail corridors for preservation in a Rail Corridor Preservation Policy dated June 22, 2000; and

WHEREAS, the Department will continue its participation with RTD, DRCOG, and the City and County of Denver in the implementation of the master plan developed for Denver Union Station for its use as a major multimodal transportation hub; and

WHEREAS, the Department will continue discussions with Class I railroads regarding the possible relocation of major freight lines out of congested areas; and

WHEREAS, the Department will continue to maintain the North Avondale Towner Line in order to ensure that freight rail service is available in portions of southeastern Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the Department will respond to the provisions set forth in Senate Bill 09-094 by appointing and convening a interim transit and rail advisory committee to specifically advise the commission and the executive director regarding the initial focus of a newly established transit and rail division ; and

WHEREAS, C.R.S. 43-1-1303(3) requires the Executive Director of CDOT to submit a prioritized list of proposed railroad acquisitions and their proposed uses to the TLRC; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Transportation Development has examined rail lines that have been abandoned, or have been proposed to be abandoned, during the past year and determined that none were rail

lines of statewide significance and none met the criteria for requiring preservation or acquisition by the State, 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:

First priority: NA Towner Line

The first priority is to continue to maintain the NA Towner line for freight service.

Second priority: UP and BNSF Relocation of Freight Lines

Continue to cooperate with the UP and BNSF to examine the opportunities for the relocation and improvement of freight service along the Front Range. The goal of these efforts would be to improve freight movement, create new economic opportunities, improve safety and air quality, and reduce congestion. Such improvements could also present opportunities for rail passenger placement in or along railroad rights-of-way.

Third priority: Valmont/Boulder Branch Line

Monitor the status of UP's Valmont/Boulder Branch Line. It does not appear UP will abandon the portion of this line east of I-25 in the near future. This line is critical to preserving options for future passenger rail for northern Colorado and relieving congestion on I-25, US 36, and US 85 and therefore should be preserved for future passenger rail service.

Fourth priority: Tennessee Pass Line

Monitor the status of UP's Tennessee Pass Line. It does not appear UP will abandon this line in the near future; however, it has not been used for over nine years. If this line is abandoned, the State should purchase it to preserve it for freight service in the future.

Fifth priority: Fort Collins Branch Line

Monitor the status of the Fort Collins Branch line. While this line does not appear to be at risk of abandonment in the near future, it is identified as a rail corridor of state significance since it connects Greeley and Fort Collins to the North Interstate 25 corridor, and is identified as part of the preferred alternative in the North Front Range Transportation Alternative Feasibility Study.