

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
JOINT STUDY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
ASSESSMENT AND SOLUTIONS



Indiana Legislative Services Agency
200 W. Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

November, 2013

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A copy of this report is available on the Internet. Reports, minutes, and notices are organized by committee. This report and other documents for this Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>.

I. STATUTORY AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DIRECTIVES

The Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation directing the Committee to do the following:

- (1) Assess the condition of Indiana's transportation infrastructure in both the public and private sectors.
- (2) In connection with the Indiana department of transportation and other interested parties, project Indiana's transportation demands through 2035.
- (3) Determine whether Indiana's existing transportation infrastructure is capable of meeting the transportation demands projected under subdivision (2).
- (4) Establish appropriate roles and responsibilities for:
 - (A) the state and county and municipal governments; and
 - (B) the private sector;in meeting Indiana's projected transportation demands.
- (5) Identify potential funding sources for both public and private transportation and infrastructure projects.
- (6) Report its findings to the governor and, in an electronic format under IC 5-14-6, the general assembly.

The Legislative Council assigned the following additional topics to the Committee:

- (1) The study topics assigned to the Committee by HEA 1450-2013, SECTION 1 (commuter rail; public mass transit funding).
- (2) The study topics assigned to the Committee by SEA 585-2013, SECTION 1 (addition of port on Lake Michigan).
- (3) The study topics assigned to the Interim Committee on Road Impact Fees (IC 2-5-36.3-2) by HEA 1324-2013, SECTION 2 (impact fees for hybrid and plug-in vehicles).
- (4) Seat belts in school buses.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM AND TESTIMONY

The Committee met four times during the 2013 interim: September 12, October 15, October 16, and November 18.

At the September 12 meeting, the Committee received testimony on the following topics:

- (1) Ports in Indiana.
- (2) Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) (South Shore Line).

Testimony focused on the feasibility of adding a second port on Lake Michigan, including the impact of a second port on the existing Port of Burns Harbor at Portage, and the governance

structure and potential expense of NICTD.

The Committee discussed the following topics at the October 15 meeting:

- (1) Issues relating to the Indiana department of transportation (INDOT).
- (2) Railroad crossings and grade separation projects.
- (3) Infrastructure funding.

Witnesses discussed INDOT's funding, infrastructure management, and project delivery, the challenges posed to railroads and local communities by grade separation projects, the need for increased infrastructure funding, and transit funding and ridership.

On October 16, the Committee adopted three recommendations and studied the following topics:

- (1) Alternative fuel vehicles and road use.
- (2) Long term funding for passenger rail and mass transit.
- (3) Ports operated by local units of government.
- (4) School bus safety.

Industry experts spoke about alternative funding mechanisms to supplement or replace declining fuel tax revenue. Representatives from communities along the Hoosier State Line encouraged the continued funding of passenger rail service in Indiana. The Committee also heard presentations concerning the statutory jurisdiction of ports operated by the Ports of Indiana and by local units of government as well as the effectiveness of seat belts on school buses.

At the November 18 meeting, the Committee adopted one recommendation concerning alternate infrastructure funding mechanisms and the final report.

IV. COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee made the following recommendations:

The Committee recommends that a Market Study be conducted concerning the long and short term potential economic opportunities and consequences of establishing additional commercial ports in the following regions:

- (1) Lake Michigan, including channels that are ordinarily navigable to Lake Michigan.
- (2) The Ohio River, including channels that are ordinarily navigable to the Ohio River.

The Committee further recommends that the market study include the following:

- (1) Current data and statistics on Great Lakes shipping trends.

(2) An analysis of the federal permitting process administered by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

The Committee recommends that legislation be enacted to amend IC 8-10 to:

- (1) clarify the potentially overlapping jurisdictions of the ports of Indiana and local port authorities; and
- (2) address the rights and responsibilities of local port authorities established before the enactment of the legislation.

The Committee recognizes that the federal Passenger Rail Investment Improvement Act of 2008 requires states with passenger rail service lines of less than 750 miles to fund the lines' operating costs, and that only the executive branch and the budget committee may address the state of Indiana's assumption of financial responsibility for the Hoosier State line operated between Indianapolis and Chicago by the National Passenger Railroad Corporation (Amtrak). However, the Committee recommends that the creation of a long term subsidy for the Hoosier State line should be considered as a potential solution only after Amtrak submits a more viable business and service plan for review and analysis by the executive branch and the budget committee.

The Committee recommends that legislation be enacted to study alternate infrastructure funding mechanisms to replace decreasing fuel tax revenues, including both a flat per vehicle option as well as an option that accounts for variations in usage and the degree of damage caused to roads and bridges by vehicles of different sizes and configurations. The Committee further recommends that the study include options that are technology neutral and protect individual privacy rights.

WITNESS LIST

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