

Proposed Amendment by Sen. Chipman

New title: Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation To Develop and Adopt a Rail Corridor Use Vision Plan for State of Maine-Owned Railroads

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and before the summary and replacing with the following:

Sec. 1. Rail Corridor Use Vision Plan. Resolved: That the Department of Transportation shall adopt a Rail Corridor Use Vision Plan, referred to in this resolve as “the vision plan,” for the following state-owned railroad lines, referred to in this resolve as “the covered corridors”: the Berlin Subdivision, referred to as the St. Lawrence and Atlantic rail corridor from Portland to Auburn; the Lower Road rail corridor from Brunswick to Augusta; the Mountain Division Line from Portland Standish; and the Rockland Branch rail corridor from Brunswick in Rockland. The vision plan must be consistent with the department's comprehensive long-range transportation plans and must be based on the study conducted under section 2. The Department of Transportation shall use the vision plan to evaluate reasonable potential uses of the covered corridors including light rail operations and as a prioritization framework for the development of compatible multimodal uses, including passenger train service, freight train service and non-rail multi-modal uses. When evaluating reasonable potential uses, the department shall evaluate the likelihood, benefits, and costs of restoration of the covered corridors for rail use consistent with the requirements of the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 23, chapter 615.

Sec. 2. Authorization of design and engineering studies; Resolved: That the Department of Transportation, with the advice of the advisory committee established under section 4, shall, through a competitive bid process, contract with an appropriate public or private entity to conduct a design and engineering study to develop a complete and comprehensive configuration plan and scope of work for restoration of the covered corridors to a minimum of Class 3 inter-urban light rail operating conditions. The configuration plan must identify train station locations in communities along each corridor, and identify necessary sidings and controls as well as track upgrades or replacements. The study must address how the covered corridors will connect to the national General Rail System. The study must identify compatible non-rail uses including bicycle and pedestrian trails in the corridor. The configuration plan may not preclude use of the covered corridors for freight train service. The study must assess the feasibility of obtaining federal Capital Improvements Grants to implement the configuration plan.

Sec. 3. Operator. Resolved: That the Department of Transportation shall seek proposals for an operator to provide passenger rail transit service on one or more of the covered corridors. The scope of services must address legal and federal railroad administration requirements for any shared use or crossings of the CSX Transportation mainline corridor and the Genesee & Wyoming railroad.

Sec. 4. Advisory committee. Resolved: That the Commissioner of Transportation shall establish by October 1, 2023 an advisory committee to advise the commissioner in adopting a vision plan under section 1 and in selecting an appropriate entity to conduct the study under section 2. The advisory committee must consist of at least 11 members and not more than 15 members. The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development or a designee shall serve on the advisory committee. The Commissioner of Transportation shall invite the following to serve on the committee: a person representing another state agency, as determined appropriate by the commissioner; the Executive Director or designee of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce; the Executive Director or designee of the Bangor Chamber of Commerce; a representative of the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments; a representative of the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center; and a person representing an organization advocating for rail use. The Commissioner of Transportation may invite other persons with expertise in rail logistics or infrastructure. The Commissioner of Transportation shall designate the chair of advisory committee. The committee shall meet at the call of the chair and shall hold a minimum of six public hearings, two of which must be in communities along the covered corridors.

Sec. 5. Report. Resolved: That by January 15, 2025, the Department of Transportation shall submit a report to the joint standing committee having jurisdiction over transportation matters that includes the results of the study conducted under the section 2 and the vision plan adopted under section 1 together with any recommendations for legislative action. After reviewing the report, the joint standing committee having jurisdiction over transportation matters may report out a bill to the 1st Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature related to subject matter of the report.

OFPR to provide necessary funding from the State Multi Modal Fund.