

Senate Committee on Transportation
April 11, 1991 - Page

These minutes contain materials which paraphrase and/or summarize statements made during this session. Only text enclosed in quotation marks report a speaker's exact words. For complete contents of the proceedings, please refer to the tapes.

Measures Heard
PH: SB 763 & 836

SENATE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION

April 11, 1991Hearing Room C
8:00 a.m.Tapes 63 & 64

MEMBERS PRESENT:Sen. Joan Dukes, Chair
Sen. William McCoy, Vice-Chair
Sen. Peter Brockman
Sen. Scott Duff
Sen. Paul Phillips
Sen. Tricia Smith
Sen. Eugene Timms

STAFF PRESENT: Ruth Larson, Committee Administrator
Shannon Gossack, Committee Assistant

WITNESSES: Mark Ford, Oregon Dept. of Transportation
Donna Davis, Citizen
Dan McFarling, Oregon Assoc. of Railway Passengers
Fred Nusbaum, Oregon Assoc. of Railway Passengers
Randy MacDonald, City of Eugene
Marvin Fjordbeck, Oregon Railroad Association
Senator William McCoy
Ed Emmel, Oregon State Rail Planner

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TAPE 63, SIDE A

010 CHAIR DUKES: Calls hearing to order at 8:20 a.m.

PUBLIC HEARING ON SB 763 AND SB 836

018 RUTH LARSON, COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATOR: Explains SB 763 and SB 836.

038 SENATOR WILLIAM MCCOY: Because of the increase in population we need to plan now. We cannot build too many more freeways or extend them much further. There are 2.8 million people today in 10 years there will be 500,000 more people in the state.

060 MARK FORD, OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION: Discusses how ODOT sees the relation of SB 763 and SB 836 in regard to their planning on this issue. (EXHIBIT A)
-Explains light rail and how it operates.
-Talks about the Washington State High Speed Commission.
-Discusses the long term policy regarding alternate modes of transportation currently being worked on by the Transportation Commission.

172 CHAIR DUKES: Asks about the cost of the study for Highway 30.

175 FORD: It was \$100,000 dollars.

181 CHAIR DUKES: Expresses concern about ODOT in regard to their fiscal analysis.
-I think the Highway 30 study was a waste of money.

192 FORD: There is a problem with funding because ODOT does not have a readily available source of money.

-We can't use highway funds on this.

-Discusses high speed rail in regard to the Washington State study.

-Explains conventional rail.

231 SEN. DUFF: What about the Pendelton area?

235 SEN. MCCOY: Discusses the original high speed study done in Washington State.

244 SEN. DUFF: What has Amtrak or Union Pacific done in this area?

248 FORD: Explains the studies that have been done.

261 SEN. DUFF: The train from eastern Oregon is just as fast as driving, but it is unreliable.

371 ED EMMEL, OREGON STATE RAIL PLANNER: Explains the problem with the Pioneer schedule.

297 SEN. DUFF: Discusses the problem with connections in regard to Amtrak.

304 EMMEL: Discusses Amtrak connections.

319 SEN. DUFF: Is the ridership on the Pioneer increasing?

323 EMMEL: It is about the same.

332 SEN. PHILLIPS: Is the Department of Energy taking the lead on this issue?

349 FORD: I think we are equally interested in saving energy. When you get through these studies it ends up being expensive.

-Discusses the balance of cost versus alternative ways of moving passengers.

-We have included energy in our technology.

382 SEN. PHILLIPS: Suggests SB 836 include the Department of Energy.

401 FORD: I can't speak for the Transportation Commission, but I think that would be a great idea.

TAPE 64, SIDE A

005 SEN. SMITH: Expresses concern over ODOT's lack of initiative in truly developing a multi-modal transportation plan.

039 SEN. TIMMS: Discusses problems with the lack of service in eastern Oregon.

062 FORD: Explains Departments point of view in terms of rural areas.
-Discusses rail and freight marketing.

081 SEN. MCCOY: Is it possible for you to get planning funds for rail from the Federal Department of Transportation?

087 FORD: I don't know.

089 SEN. MCCOY: Discusses the funding aspect and how other states go about getting those resources.

100 SEN. SMITH: Why do you need a Technical Advisory Committee?

105 FORD: We don't have the expertise in some of those areas, and it is important to have the various interests represented.

127 SEN. SMITH: There is no one over there that can handle any of this?

130 FORD: Explains the lack of staffing on existing programs.

140 CHAIR DUKES: What does a state rail planner do?

142 EMMEL: Explains what a rail planner does.

165 CHAIR DUKES: How is your position funded, and have you every looked for other funding?

167 EMMEL: Seventy percent by the Federal Railroad Association and thirty percent through PUC.
-We have made some proposals in the past, but it is hard to plan long term when we don't know what the funding will be.

182 CHAIR DUKES: Have there been any internal discussions about establishing a Rail Department within ODOT?

186 FORD: Yes we have.

194 EMMEL: We submitted a rail program to the last management of ODOT.

214 CHAIR DUKES: Talk with people and come up with a way to make this work.
-Explains frustration with the Department of Transportation.

255 SEN. SMITH: If it won't work I want to hear that from the Director.

260 SEN. TIMMS: Ed has worked very hard to preserve some of the rails that were going to be abandoned.

275 EMMEL: We are currently working on providing bus service to Burns Oregon.

282 CHAIR DUKES: Who within ODOT works on bus service?

287 FORD: There is a person that works directly on the bus issue.

301 SEN. MCCOY: What about right of ways?

305 EMMEL: Explains how right of ways work and how they are purchased.

353 DONNA DAVIS, CITIZEN: Submits and reviews written testimony. (EXHIBIT B)

TAPE 63, SIDE B

090 DAVIS: Continues with written testimony. (EXHIBIT B)

107 SEN. SMITH: How does the cost of high speed rail compare to a highway?

110 DAVIS: The average for an urban highway is 43 million, and rural highways are less expensive.

114 SEN. SMITH: How are these trains fueled?

115 DAVIS: These are electrically fueled.
-Explains study done on the cost of electricity in regard to cost.

124 SEN. DUFF: Do we have existing railroad right of ways?

127 DAVIS: Discusses how other states are dealing with right of way acquisitions.
-Talks about the Oregon Electric Railroad line.

139 LARSON: Submits ORS. information. (EXHIBIT C)

147 DAN MCFARLING, OREGON ASSOCIATION OF RAILWAY PASSENGERS: Discusses rail construction in regard to cost.
-Suggests that SB 836 include a representative from a rail passenger consumer group.
-Refers to ORS 184.618.

215 FRED NUSSB AUM, OREGON ASSOCIATION OF RAILWAY PASSENGERS: Submits possible amendments to SB 763 and SB 836. (EXHIBIT D & E)
-Suggest possible ways to get technical support without paying for it.
-We would be willing to do this study for you for \$35,000.00 dollars.
-Suggests adding freight rail as well as passenger rail to SB 763.

307 SEN. SMITH: I don't really care how the commission gets their plan as long as it is a good one.
-Would you be satisfied if the bill passed without that direction?

327 NUSSB AUM: Expresses skepticism regarding ODOT.

335 CHAIR DUKES: Nothing else about the plan, as they are doing it, is in statute. Only the requirement that they produce a plan.

351 SEN. DUFF: Can we try to improve the service that does exist right now?

360 NUSSB AUM: On May 11 we are having a conference in eastern Oregon about that issue.

370 SEN. SMITH: Compares ODOT's fiscal analysis with OARP's offer.

393 NUSSB AUM: It is based on a lot of donated time on our part.

408 SEN. SMITH: Discusses the expertise needed to deal with this issue.

415 NUSSB AUM: Explains how existing resources can be utilized in determining a workable study.

TAPE 64, SIDE B

007 SEN. SMITH: Asks about the effects of a new rail line through land.

009 NUSSB AUM: We have worked with the development of light rail. I also worked on the original Willamette Valley Rail Study.

017 SEN. DUFF: I would like to know if existing right of ways could be used rather than purchasing new ones.

026 NUSSB AUM: Discusses the right of ways in regard to high speed rail.

050 RANDY MACDONALD, CITY OF EUGENE: Submits and reviews written testimony. (EXHIBIT F)

098 SEN. SMITH: Do you think it is possible for governments to loan out their expertise?

107 MACDONALD: Explains existing governments that currently loan out expertise.

131 MARVIN FJORDBECK, OREGON RAILROAD ASSOCIATION & SOUTHERN PACIFIC TRANSPORTATION COMPANY: We supports amendments to SB 763 and the bill.
-Discusses conventional rail and high speed rails.
-All of the potential interested parties need to get together to discuss this issue.
-Expresses crossing safety in regard to the high speed rails.

165 SEN. DUFF: The electra-magnetic system was off the ground. Within the configuration of the railroad right of way could you build such a system up off the ground, and how does that relate to the right of way issue?

173 FJORDBECK: The width of right of way varies from 200 feet to 60 feet. In some portions the right of way might accommodate both.

186 SEN. DUFF: It would be cheaper to incorporate what we already have than create or try to acquire a new right of way.

190 SEN. SMITH: I assume that this would be a boost to the rail industry and I hope that you would be willing to do something more than offer fair market value for your land. Are you willing to participate in the direction but not the development?

202 FJORDBECK: Southern Pacific and the Oregon Railroads would like to do both.
-Discusses the loan of expertise as a resource.

238 SEN. DUFF: Have other railroads done research on different modes of high speed rail?

230 FJORDBECK: I believe that there is some expertise within Southern Pacific.

259 CHAIR DUKES: Adjourns hearing at 9:56 a.m.

Submitted by, Reviewed by,

Shannon GossackRuth Larson
AssistantAdministrator

EXHIBIT LOG:

- A - Mark Ford, SB 763, 6 pgs.
- B - Donna Davis, SB 836, 6 pgs.
- C - Staff, SB 783, 1 pg.
- D - Fred NusSB aum, SB 763, 1 pg.
- E - Fred NusSB aum SB 836, 2 pgs.
- F - Randy McDonald, SB 836, 3 pgs.