

**WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
Regular Meeting Summary  
October 20 & 21, 2015

Chairman Haley opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

**COMMISSION BUSINESS**

Commissioner Litt moved adoption of the September 9, 2015 Sunnyside meeting summary. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jennings. The meeting summary was adopted unanimously.

Commissioner Jennings reported on the tolling team's preparation for 2016 tolling work on SR 520. He also reported meeting with Rep. Pike, who would like to talk with the Commission about a third bridge over the Columbia River in Clark County, and he reported that Executive Director Reema Griffith gave the keynote at the Southwest Labor Council meeting.

Commissioner Jennings also reported on the Vancouver Energy Project, for which an EIS is underway, and the new oil tank cars: DOT 120J replaces CPC1232 and DOT11A. Commissioner Tortorelli added that Spokane residents are very interested in tanker car safety. The railroads have said that oil trains will move no faster than 30 mph through cities and will slow to about 15 mph approaching Vancouver.

Commissioner Brogan reported on the ferry tour that she and Commissioner Jennings took, along with legislators and staff. She also participated at a WSDOT Conference on Innovations and Partnerships.

Chairman Haley, Commissioner Tortorelli and Ms. Griffith met with Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers to brief her on the Road Usage Charge Assessment.

Carl See was introduced as the Commission's new Senior Financial Analyst.

Staff provided an overview of the development of the 2015 Annual Report and asked for suggestions on content and organization. Commissioners asked that staff provide them with a list of recommendations from previous years, and develop cover options for their consideration in November.

**ROAD USAGE CHARGE UPDATE**

Paula Hammond, Senior VP, National Transportation Market Leader, Parsons Brinckerhoff and Jeff Doyle, Principle Consultant, D'Artagnan Consulting, briefed the Commission on the 2015 work plan for continued assessment and evaluation of a road usage charge as a sustainable transportation source. Most members of the Road Usage Charge (RUC) Steering Committee continue to feel the current revenue model is unsustainable. However, many also recognize the new revenue package has reduced the urgency for an alternative to the gas tax. There is continued interest to understand the effects of bonding on a transition away from gas tax

Looking at what has been done in Washington to date, (and the Legislative proviso for 2015), each steering committee member was asked what they thought was the most important thing to accomplish between now and the end of year? Their responses:

- Leverage the work of other states
- Continue cost analysis

- Strategize on public perception and education
- Revenue transition and roles
- Short and long term strategy for a RUC future

Key policy issues that need resolution prior to advancing a RUC recommendation, in priority order:

- Administration and rate setting
- Gas tax bond/debt impacts
- Protection and use of revenue
- Public engagement and education
- Collection methods and technology
- Out-of-state driver payments
- Legal and privacy issues
- Fairness
- Who pays/vehicle transition
- Cost to collect
- Interoperability with other states

Three-quarters of respondents definitely support a demonstration project. Their guidance:

- Should be informed by the Oregon and California experience
- Avoid duplication of other states' tests
- Develop clear criteria for what we are testing and why
- Demonstrate the testing of options, but keep it educational
- Test technology
- Create a broad demonstration with variety of vehicles and geographic locations

PSRC's Transportation Futures Task Force is examining funding options to achieve the objectives in the Transportation 2040 Plan. This effort, composed of regional elected leadership and civic leaders, is considering several scenarios comprising different revenue sources to fill a \$36 billion (in 2008 dollars) regional funding gap. A regional layer of road usage charge is emerging as a lead funding option. A regional RUC raises interesting governance issues and collaboration opportunities, including how regional RUC rates would be set, collected, and distributed locally.

Among other states around the United States, the focus is on:

- OReGO: Oregon's RUC program
- California Road Charge Pilot Project & Program
- Wisconsin's mileage-based concept
- Western Road Usage Charge Consortium (WRUCC)

California's Road Charge Pilot Program is intended to replace the existing fuel tax revenue sometime in the future. A nine-month, statewide pilot test will begin July 2016. A select 15-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) charged with recommending pilot design has done extensive public engagement and outreach and has recommended an independent third-party evaluation of the program.

Key recommendations of the California TAC to date:

- Will test 6 different methods of road charge payment and reporting
- Several privacy protection measures proposed: "privacy by design" (time permit); governance, accountability and legal protection measures
- Statewide pilot of approximately 5,000+ diverse participants based on geography, household income, businesses, out-of-state, etc.
- California Trucking Association members volunteered to participate

- Will test out-of-state vehicle road charge payment methods
- Independent, 3rd-party pilot evaluation

Choices available to California participants:

- Pay only for miles driven on California roads
  - Options of on-board device with location, smartphone, or telematics
- Pay for all miles driven
  - Options of mileage permit, odometer charge, or on-board device without location
- Pay up-front for all-you-can-drive with a time permit

Wisconsin has proposed a mileage-based registration fee. The purpose is to allow a variable pricing component to Wisconsin's vehicle registration fee – based on usage (miles).

Parameters:

- Leverage existing vehicle registration processes to keep implementation and administrative costs lower
- Low-tech alternative (at least in the short run) to avoid large technology investments

Key findings:

- Fixed rate + variable component vehicle registration fee could raise very significant revenue when charging 1.5 cents/mile
- Self-reported mileage raises tax evasion risks; mitigation measures recommended, including periodic independent verification (repairs shops, license subagents, etc.)
- Allowing 3,000 mile credit to all drivers for out-of-state miles is key mitigation strategy

Colorado has just released an RFP as a first step in operating a pilot program.

The RUC Steering Committee will update the business case analysis. Items to update:

- Washington State Transportation Revenue Package
  - Change in fuel tax rate necessitates change in RUC rate
  - Transition to RUC possibly impacted by bonds
- Federal CAFE standards for trucks
  - EPA recently announced extension of fuel economy standards for medium- and heavy-duty trucks through MY 2027
  - Current + new standards are predicted to result in more than a 40% reduction in fuel consumption
- Changes in VMT and fuel consumption trends
  - Previous RUC business case analysis relied on a range of forecasts including VMT, fuel economy, and fuel consumption
  - Updates to all inputs will be made – using scenarios as before as necessary

Issues identified by RUC Steering Committee:

- Discuss RUC Rate
- Tighten RUC cost estimates
- Revisit forecasts of fuel consumption and VMT
- Address agency vs. private sector responsibilities
- Re-consider RUC transitions
- How long is the fuel tax viable?
- Do more than simply “refresh” the business case

Purpose of business case analysis is to provide comparison of fuel tax and RUC. The proposed key output is *net revenue per mile driven*.

Assumptions:

1. At 19.8 MPG and 49.4 cents/gallon, the average Washington driver will pay 2.5 cents/mile in state fuel tax.
2. Fuel tax rate. Options:
  - a. Determine fuel tax rate that matches a flat RUC rate (above)
  - b. Assume RUC and fuel tax rates remain flat – and compare
  - c. Assume both rates increase periodically – and compare
3. Key assumptions needed to narrow cost estimates *for analysis purposes only*. Any input provided by the Committee is not to be interpreted as a policy decision or direction.
  - a. Agency administration
  - b. Private service providers
  - c. Transition from fuel tax to RUC
  - d. RUC operational concepts
4. No motorist pays both fuel tax and RUC. Options:
  - a. Assume fuel tax in place long enough to retire existing and future fuel tax bonds
  - b. Assume fuel tax as a pre-payment mechanism for RUC, thus covering future fuel tax bonds
  - c. Do not consider debt service as a barrier to transition away from fuel tax

Many policy, legal, and operational issues remain. Some are being addressed in other states.

Top unresolved policy issues:

- Transition approaches: how and when would a transition be made from gas tax?
- Vehicles subject to RUC: which vehicles are required to pay?
- Equity/Fairness of RUC: how does RUC compare with gas tax for different persons?
- Alternative RUC approaches: are there lower-tech methods for RUC?
- Data security: can personal information be protected from disclosure?
- Public perception and acceptance: what are public attitudes toward RUC at various stages of development?
- Rate-setting: how will they be set, by whom, and in what amount?
- Exemptions, refunds and credits: what types of vehicles are exempt from RUC?

Top unresolved legal issues:

- Protection of motor fuel tax bonds: how can RUC be implemented in manner that protects legal obligations and ratings of current bonds?
- Privacy issues: what options are available to protect personal privacy?
- Tax or fee: is RUC a fee rather than a tax, affecting how rates are adjusted?
- Use or dedication of revenue: is RUC subject to same 18<sup>th</sup> amendment restrictions as gas tax?
- Payment from out-of-state motorists: how can RUC be designed to accommodate (and enforce) payments by out-of-state motorists?

Top unresolved operational issues:

- Mileage reporting methods: which options should be used in Washington?
- System technology to support RUC: what IT software, hardware and services are required to support RUC?
- Use of commercial account managers: should private firms be involved in RUC tax collection?

- Scalable demonstration project options: how can state be prepared to conduct a demonstration/pilot project if funded?
- Organizational design/agency roles: what state agencies should participate in RUC?
- Interoperability with other states: how will Washington’s system work with others?
- Enforcement of mileage reporting and payment: how will payment be enforced?
- Refine cost of collections estimates: what variables must be refined, or decisions made, to narrow the range of potential public and private collection costs?
- Interoperability with toll systems: what are the benefits and drawbacks of a RUC that is interoperable with Washington’s *GoodToGo* toll system?
- Effects on congestion levels: can (and should) RUC be priced to improve congestion in urban areas?

In the remainder of 2015:

- ✓ Business case revisions
- ✓ Structuring RUC to protect bond obligations
- ✓ Refining operational concepts (and range of costs to collect)
- ✓ Scalable demonstration project alternatives
- ✓ Defining the proper work plan for next step in 2016

A proposed 2016 work plan may address readiness for emergent opportunities, and the logical sequence for future work. One barrier to implementation is that the current computer systems at the Department of Licensing are not flexible and can’t adapt to meet needs to support RUC.

Tony Sermonti, Policy and Legislative Director, Department of Licensing, provided an update on the modernization of vehicle licensing. Vehicle licensing is done by 39 county offices and about 140 licensing subagents using antiquated licensing systems. The new licensing system will be able to support RUC, but it’s not a simple “flip of the switch” change.

- Vehicle infrastructure is not customer-centric
  - Billing and enforcement are built around the vehicle, not the vehicle owner(s)
- Modernization project will help DOL definitively connect owners and vehicles
- The new system may be capable to receive EPA mpg information
  - DOL is not aware of an existing public or private industry source for this service
- Track and report RUC decals or separate RUC and registration expiration dates?
- Changes for County Auditors and subagents?
- Managing RUC registration by multiple entities could present challenges to the customer and DOL data/system integration, potential confusion by customers over service providers and billing, etc.

### [Road Usage Charge Update](#)

***Follow-up/Action: December Commission agenda will include RUC Steering Committee recommendations.***

### **I-405 FIRST MONTH UPDATE**

Craig Stone, Assistant Secretary, Toll Division, WSDOT, reported on the operation of the Express Toll Lanes (ETL). The ETL is one part of a multi-modal plan for improving mobility on the I-405 Corridor.

During the second week of ETL operations, traffic moved faster in the general purpose lanes and dramatically faster in the ETLs. Transit trip time has decreased in the northbound afternoon peak from 25-35 minutes to about 15-18 minutes.

The toll rate has exceeded \$5 twice – both times due to incidents blocking traffic. So far, tolls have not come near the \$10 maximum rate.

Similar to other tolling projects, WSDOT is collecting and comparing traffic data before and after the I-405 express toll lanes open. Data will indicate traffic performance in express toll lanes and general purpose lanes in terms of speed, travel times, vehicle throughput (vehicles/hour). The evaluation also will look at impacts on regional traffic and local arterials. Supplemental monitoring will include transit, occupancy, enforcement and safety.

On the two-lane ETL section, the toll rate is generally \$0.75; the rate has increased for the single-lane ETL section between Bothell and Lynnwood.

### [Tolling Facility Update](#)

*Follow-up/Action: Continue to monitor.*

### **TNB 2016 RATE SETTING (TOLLING OVERVIEW)**

Last year, the Transportation Commission chose to set toll rates for two consecutive fiscal years, FY 2016 and FY 2017:

- FY 2016 2-axle toll rates - \$5.00
- FY 2017 2-axle toll rates - \$5.50 (begins July 2016)

A toll rate review this winter will confirm that last year's action remains sufficient to pay outstanding debt service. The TNB Citizens Advisory Committee will review the financial plan, assumptions, revised budget and revenue projections. After reviewing the financial plan, the CAC and Commission will determine whether a rate setting process is required.

Mr. Stone also discussed the Toll Division workplan for FY 2016 and the continuing work to develop an RFP for Customer Service Center (CSC) Procurement. The key drivers are:

- Need to ensure WSDOT business continuity;
- The quality of the customer service provided by the vendor;
- The ability of vendor's systems and operations plan to grow as new toll facilities are added. Four more facilities are planned to be operating by FY 2025 for a forecasted revenue collection of \$300 million;
- Existing vendor contract expires June 30, 2016, with an extension option to June 30, 2018;
- The ability to support toll operations through the 2020 decade; and
- Ability to provide single-customer account for multiple transportation modes facilitating choice of travel.

Toll Division goals for CSC:

1. Back office infrastructure that is sustainable, configurable and scalable throughout the full term of the contract including all potential contract extensions.
2. An integrated solution that maximizes the use of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) products to provide multi-user and multi-tasking capabilities.
3. Provide data that is transparent, flexible and meets the needs of all users.

4. Optimize the use of modern adaptive technology to enhance customer service functionality to the benefit of the customer, which is customer driven and incorporates continuous improvement of the customer experience.
5. Ability to integrate with multimodal systems, e.g. ferries, parking, and transit and be interoperable with other toll agencies.

The Toll Division also has sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the best approach for the state in replacing the various customer account systems, namely those utilized by the Toll Division and the Ferries Division?
- Should WSDOT look to the future and prepare for integration into a multi-modal system that could include transit and light rail?

### [Toll Division Biennial Work Program](#)

***Follow-up/Action: Meet with TNB Citizens Advisory Committee. Continue to monitor Customer Service Center RFP process.***

### **TOLLING FACILITY FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

Mr. Stone and Joel Emery, Director, Toll Finance & Program Management, WSDOT, reported on FY 2015 traffic and revenue for SR 520 and TNB. Both facilities are very close to revenue targets.

### [Draft Financial Statement](#)

***Follow-up/Action: None***

### **AIRPORT INVESTMENT STUDY: SOLUTIONS PHASE**

Tristan Atkins, Director, WSDOT Aviation Division, and Rob Hodgman, Senior Planner, Aviation Division, WSDOT, briefed the Commission on the Solutions Phase of the Airport Investment Study. It applies to Washington's 135 public use airports, of which 64 airports are eligible for federal funding.

The Airport Investment Study estimates that the state's 135 public-use airports will need nearly \$3.6 billion for eligible projects during the next 20 years. The State's share of the overall program need of \$3.6 billion is more than \$240 million, resulting in an average annual need of more than \$12 million. WSDOT's Airport Aid Program is forecasted to provide an average of \$1.4 million in state airport grants per year, pending decisions from the legislature.

What are some potential consequences of not funding capital needs at Washington state airports?

- The state could lose out in \$2 billion in economic output, 13,600 jobs and \$74 million in uncollected tax revenues.
- Airports would face negative impacts to facilities and operations, especially at smaller general aviation airports not eligible for federal funds.
- Airport funding would focus on core infrastructure (e.g., runways and taxiways), while other critical infrastructure would likely be maintained and improved at reduced levels.

Potential Solutions include:

1. Public Private Partnerships (P3)
2. Alternative Taxing of Airport Operationally Oriented Uses
3. Alternative Economic Development-Based Consumption Tax

4. Establish a State-Sponsored Revolving Aviation Infrastructure Loan Fund
5. Realignment of Current Transportation Revenue Allocations
6. Reallocate Airport Leasehold Tax to the Aeronautics Account
7. Increase Select Aviation Tax Rates
8. Revise Fuel Excise Tax Exemptions
9. Modify the State Aircraft Excise Tax Program
10. Develop a Best Management Practices Guidebook/Toolkit for State Airports

Solutions implemented to date:

- #9. Modify the State Aircraft Excise Tax Program

Solutions moving forward—

- #10. Develop a Best Management Practices Guidebook/Toolkit for State Airports

Commissioner Tortorelli suggested the .09 sales tax rebate to rural counties, which is intended for rural economic development, could be used for rural airports.

WSDOT Aviation is implementing a ‘working group’ methodology to explore and analyze specific issues in greater detail.

The upcoming Aviation System Plan will review and analyze air cargo:

- Assess capacity issues related to:
  - Air Cargo aircraft Remain Overnight (RON) parking
  - Freight sorting facilities at airports with current air cargo services or those extremely likely to need these activities in the future
- Assess air cargo capacity issues related to multimodal connection needs
- Forecast Air Cargo trends:
  - How do Washington state airports measure up in interstate/intrastate Air Freight competition?
  - What is the national overview and detailed domestic and international market factors that affect Washington state?

Atkins noted that the competition between Delta and Alaska has provided a reprieve for small, rural airports in Washington.

Commissioners also expressed interest in commercial capacity at Sea-Tac and Central Puget Sound. Mr. Hodgman indicated that there are three components in play at Paine Field for commercial service:

- FAA
- Lawsuit against state
- Feasibility study of commercial service viability

### [Airport Investment Study Solutions Phase](#)

*Follow-up/Action: None*

### **SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Roger Millar, the new Deputy Secretary for WSDOT, began his professional career with the Portland DOT. He was planning manager for the streetcar project and for the Pearl District. In Western Colorado, he worked on the entrance to Aspen. Since 1993, the number of cars entering Aspen has not increased. He also was project manager for the first Bus Rapid Transit project in the United States. He worked on the

PATH center and the Fulton Street Station in Lower Manhattan. He served as Deputy City Manager for McCall, Idaho; then as planning director for Missoula and the MPO. From 2010 until last month, he headed up technical assistance for Smart Growth America. He also has worked as a consultant in numerous states.

At WSDOT, he will focus on four things:

- How do we implement practical solutions. It can't be top-down to be successful. We have to do a better job of framing the problem to be solved.
- How we integrate WSF better into WSDOT.
- How to take advantage of the work we've done in tolling.
- Embracing diversity in what we do.

Mr. Millar asked the Commission for patience and guidance. He urged us to think about the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy. We need to get our heads around autonomous vehicles. They will change parking. He asked: Do we let technology drive how we live, or choose what we want and drive technology to meet that?

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sonny Putter has been attending the monthly meetings of the PSRC Transportation Funding Task Force. He suggested we work with them on their funding options.

Adrian Wright, a citizen in Olympia, expressed concern that the Commission was going to act on the road user charge today. He is relieved that isn't happening. He thinks it will hurt people who are younger and low-income.

### **WTP 2035 IMPLEMENTATION – Phase 2 Update**

Kerri Woehler, Director, Multi-Modal Planning, WSDOT, characterized WTP Phase 1 as “the what” and Phase 2 as “the how.” Phase 2 will reflect WSDOT’s strategic direction and address the Governor’s direction on climate change. It will integrate the public transportation plan and the aviation plan into the multi-modal, coordinated approach defined by statute and in Phase 1. Phase 2 will identify how practical solutions are used to implement the long-range plan.

Richard Warren, Manager, Planning Studies, WSDOT, briefed the Commission on the WTP survey conducted June 11 – 22 through the Voice of Washington State. Surveys were sent to 30,631 panel members and 7,254 surveys were completed. The response rate was the highest of any VOWS survey and over 3300 comments were submitted.

Mr. Warren reported that 78% of respondents support the WTP Vision Statement. Mobility is the highest ranked of the six statutory policy goals, but all six goals are closely clumped. Increasing capacity and maintaining the system are valued equally. Commissioners suggested that future surveys might probe why people rate the state and local transportation systems so poorly. What, specifically, can be improved.

Ms. Griffith recommended that Commission staff delineate responsibility for acting on WTP 2035 recommendations to better focus on progress in meeting the recommendations. It will be easier to evaluate progress in the policy areas where the state has primary responsibility due to the direct state policy and funding role, than those policy areas where the regional or local role is primary.

[WTP 2035 Phase 2 Update  
Fact Sheet](#)

*Follow-up/Action: Continue to participate with WSDOT on WTP implementation.*

## **WSDOT DRAFT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Stan Suchan, Manager, Project Development & Evaluation, WSDOT, presented an overview of the Draft State Public Transportation Plan currently out for public comment. Commissioner Haley commented that the definition of public transportation in the plan seems to include many types of transportation, but the plan doesn't address all of them the same.

Mr. Suchan acknowledged that the plan addresses many types of public transportation, and does so in different ways. Passenger rail, for example, is addressed primarily in the rail plan.

Ms. Griffith asked if there was discussion of how and when the state should engage in policy/funding for public transportation. How and when should the state participate in public transportation.

[WTP Matrix](#)

[WTP Folio](#)

*Follow-up/Action: None*

## **PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS**

Nancy Boyd, Director, Engineering Policy & Innovation, WSDOT, briefed the Commission on how the department is implementing practical solutions for the transportation system of the future. At this point, the interstate system is pretty much done.

- National design guidance has improved consistency
- Vastly improved safety
- At WSDOT, we are completing the largest capital delivery program in our history

What's next?

- Aging infrastructure – in 2014 met 78% of maintenance targets, down from 80% in 2013
- There are more problems than money to fix them

The goal is to fix more problems system wide. How do we change the culture at WSDOT? How do we identify what projects to do? What is the most cost-effective solution to a problem? Some influencing factors:

- WSDOT Project Development training program has been decimated
- New/emerging tools for design/safety analysis
- Planning/political process, habits
- Evolving environmental considerations
- Constant push for regulatory reform

In some states this approach has meant a focus on the design standards, but WSDOT thinks it begins before then. WSDOT is developing formalized training for staff to use least-cost planning to determine the appropriate solution for a problem then, if a project is needed, apply practical design to build it.

- Support decisions that will focus on the need for the project
- Move from a standards-based to performance-based designs
- Empower agency staff to make decisions
- Provide tools that support decision making
- Support staff through training and development

Focus areas include:

- Major WSDOT Design Manual changes
- Multimodal, demand management, operational, and off-system strategies
- Incremental solutions (as opposed to all-in-one projects)
- Context Sensitive Solutions, implemented more fully

A Practical Solutions Committee was formed in September 2015 for implementation of the Connecting Washington package:

- Composed of WSDOT leadership team, programs, modes, regions and FHWA
  - Multidisciplinary review of every Connecting Washington Project
  - Identifying best practices for statewide implementation
- Forum for learning and sharing how we will deliver at the lowest cost
- Encourages innovation and creativity in design approach
- Savings achieved now will fund future preservation and capital projects

### [WSDOT Practical Solutions](#)

***Follow-up/Action: Continue to monitor application of practical solutions to the implementation of Connecting Washington.***

### **FUTURE OF PASSENGER RAIL**

Ron Pate, Director, WSDOT Rail and Marine Division, briefed the Commission on Intercity Passenger Rail and Freight Rail Projects. Ten of 20 high-speed rail capital projects are complete. Projects coming up in the next 18 months:

- Slide Management Projects – four additional sites near Mukilteo and Everett complete this month (2 others done in 2013)
- Eight new Siemens Charger locomotives delivered in fall 2016
- Two corridor reliability upgrade projects to add state-of-the-art technology and equipment along entire Washington corridor
- Three projects in the Kelso/Kalama/ Longview region to improve capacity and reduce congestion
- Bypass at the Vancouver Rail Yard to separate passenger and freight traffic and reduce congestion
- King Street Station track improvements to reconfigure connections and increase capacity for all trains operating at station
- New Tacoma Amtrak Cascades station and inland bypass between Tacoma and Nisqually

Amtrak Cascades Operations and 2017 New Service Launch:

- In 2017, adding two daily roundtrips between Seattle and Portland – for a total of six
- Coordinating with Sound Transit, Amtrak, BNSF and Union Pacific for smooth transition
- Convening Station Stop Policy advisory committee
- Maintaining and improving on board experience, including Wi-Fi, media players, food and beverage service, bike storage

Current deadline for full implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) is December 31, 2015 but few corridors are ready. PTC is designed to prevent train-to-train collisions, control excessive speeds, and move trains more safely through switches. It applies to railroad main lines with intercity passenger or commuter rail services or poisonous-inhalation-hazardous materials.

Congress is considering legislation to extend deadline to 2018. Amtrak Cascades operates on BNSF and UP tracks. Both companies are likely to suspend passenger rail service if Congress fails to extend the deadline. Beginning December 1, 2015 Amtrak plans to start notifying passengers through its reservation system of possible service disruptions. Penalties for railroads operating without certification could be \$25,000-\$50,000 per train, per day, per subdivision.

Commissioners asked about resiliency of the rail system following a major seismic event. BNSF has a plan for seismic events and WSDOT has discussed certain bridges with them, such as use of the Skagit River railroad bridge. BNSF is confident that bridges will be back in operation within two weeks.

### Future of Passenger Rail

*Follow-up/Action: None*

### ALL ABOARD WAHSINGTON

Lloyd Flem, Executive Director of All Aboard Washington (AAW), said that AAW fully supports the work of the WSDOT rail division. It is one of the best state rail agencies in the nation.

AAW would like to see more than 10 minutes improvement in trip time between Seattle and Portland. A 25 minute time improvement would increase use of the system. It isn't necessary or appropriate to spend vast sums of money to have high speed rail, but it would recommend working toward 90 mph speeds.

AAW has been working with community leaders and elected officials in Kittitas and Yakima Counties for future passenger service on the original NP line across Stampede Pass.

AAW has three suggestions for improving connectivity:

- Require public and private providers to actively provide information on existing connections
- Reasonable schedule adjustments to allow better connectivity, such as regular bus connection from Olympia's Centennial station to the transit center and capitol campus
- Investments to increase connectivity as recommended in WTP 2015

*Follow-up/Action: None*

### Public Comment

Paul W. Locke commented that Initiative 1366 should help to control spending. He also stated that charter buses move more people than Link Light Rail from Sea-Tac. He also complained that the public can't afford the cost of the transit operators. The ferry system should be reduced.

**TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

\_\_\_\_\_  
ANNE E. HALEY, Chairman

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JOE TORTORELLI, Vice-Chairman

ABSENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
RITA BROGAN, Member

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VACANT

\_\_\_\_\_  
ROY JENNINGS, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
VACANT

\_\_\_\_\_  
JERRY LITT, Member

ATTEST:

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REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

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DATE OF APPROVAL