

TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

ALL Counties

MINUTE ORDER

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On August 31, 2005, the governor, in a letter to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), designated the Texas Department of Transportation (department) as the agency that will administer and coordinate Texas' participation in rail planning activities and responsibilities.

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 requires states to develop state rail plans which include freight and passenger rail to qualify for federal funding. The department has updated and revised the 2005 Texas Rail System Plan to establish a common vision for the state to enhance the department's opportunities for receiving federal funds. While official guidance has yet to be issued, the main components of a state rail plan include establishing a vision, goals, and objectives for the rail system and its integration into the state's multimodal transportation system. Other key components are an inventory of the freight and passenger rail infrastructure and the performance of a needs assessment. The final component is planning for the future by developing prioritized programs and financing strategies to achieve the state's vision, goals, and objectives.

In addition, Transportation Code §201.6013 requires the department to create a long-term plan for a statewide passenger rail system, which is required to include annual updates on existing and proposed passenger rail systems, analysis of potential interconnectivity difficulties, and ridership projections. It also requires the department to coordinate the planning, construction, operation, and maintenance of a statewide passenger rail system and to coordinate with local entities involved with passenger rail responsibilities.

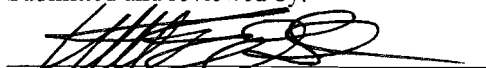
The Texas Rail Plan has been presented for stakeholder and public comment by means of various stakeholder workshops and public meetings conducted throughout the state. The purpose of the workshops and meetings was to solicit input and comments from affected public agencies, rail industry representatives, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, providers of freight transportation services, public transit users, rail advocacy groups, and the general public. A public hearing for the Texas Rail Plan was held on October 6, 2010. Nine oral comments were received and two written statements were submitted at the hearing.

After due deliberation and consideration, the Texas Transportation Commission finds that the Texas Rail Plan creates a common vision for the further development of freight and passenger rail in the state. The Texas Rail Plan, attached as Exhibit A to this order, also fully satisfies the requirements of Texas Transportation Code §201.6013 and is consistent with the department's Strategic Plan for 2011-2015.

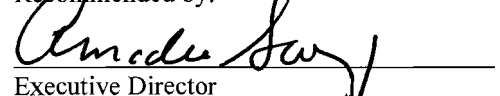
IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Texas Transportation Commission that the Texas Rail Plan, which is attached as Exhibit A to this order, is hereby approved.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the executive director, or his designee, shall submit the Texas Rail Plan to the FRA and sign all necessary certifications required by state and federal regulations.

Submitted and reviewed by:

  
Director, Rail Division

Recommended by:

  
Executive Director

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Minute Number      Date Passed