



Legislative Council Staff

Research Note

Version: House Second
Reading
Date: 4/18/2017

Bill Number

Senate Bill 17-153

Sponsors

**Senators Garcia & Crowder
Representative Esgar**

Short Title

**Southwest Chief & Front Range
Passenger Rail Commission**

Research Analyst

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Status

The bill is currently pending before the House on second reading. This research note reflects the reengrossed bill as amended by the House Transportation and Energy Committee.

Background

The Amtrak Southwest Chief Rail Line provides interstate rail service from Chicago to Los Angeles with stops in the Colorado cities of Lamar, La Junta, and Trinidad. Amtrak operates the rail line in Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico on tracks owned by the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway. The Southwest Chief Rail Line Economic Development, Rural Tourism, and Infrastructure Repair and Maintenance Commission was created by House Bill 14-1161. The commission is charged with coordinating efforts by the state and local governments and cooperating with the states of Kansas and New Mexico, Amtrak, and the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway to ensure the continuation of existing Amtrak Southwest Chief Rail Line service in the state. It is also charged with exploring the expansion of such service to including stops in Pueblo and Walsenburg. The commission consists of nine members, seven of which are voting members. The two non-voting members include an employee of Colorado Department of Transportation and an employee of Amtrak. No reimbursements have been paid to commissioners for expenses in the current FY 2016-17.

Type 1 transfer. A Type 1 transfer is the intact transfer of an existing department, institution, or agency to a principal department. Such transfers provide autonomy for a state agency from its

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principal department. Unless otherwise limited by statute, the powers of a Type 1 agency include the exercise of prescribed statutory powers, duties, and functions including:

- rule-making;
- regulation;
- licensing and registration;
- promulgation of rules, rates, regulations, and standards; and
- rendering of findings, orders, and adjudications.

Unless a function is specifically vested by statute in a Type 1 agency, all other functions are performed by the principal department, including, but not limited to:

- budgeting;
- purchasing; and
- planning, and related management functions.

Senate Action

Senate Local Government Committee (February 14, 2017). At the hearing, the Mayor of Trinidad and two members of the Southwest Chief Rail Line Economic Development, Rural Tourism, and Infrastructure Repair and Maintenance Commission testified in support of the bill. The committee referred the bill, without amendment, to the Senate Finance Committee.

Senate Finance Committee (February 16, 2017). At the hearing, representatives of the Colorado Rail Passenger Association testified in support of the bill. The committee referred the bill, without amendment, to the Senate Committee of the Whole.

Senate second reading (February 22, 2017). The Senate passed the bill on second reading with no amendments.

Senate third reading (February 23, 2017). The Senate passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.

House Action

House Transportation and Energy Committee (April 12, 2017). At the hearing, representatives of the Colorado Rail Passenger Association, the Southwest Chief Rail Line Economic Development, Rural Tourism, and Infrastructure Repair and Maintenance Commission, and the the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers testified in support of the bill. The committee adopted Amendment L.001 which added the bill number to the bill and changed a statutory reference. It referred the bill, as amended, to the House Committee of the Whole.