

CHAPTER 49-17.1 RAIL SERVICE ASSISTANCE

49-17.1-01. Definitions.

1. "Commission" means the public service commission.
2. "Department" means the department of transportation of this state as provided in section 24-02-01.1.

49-17.1-02. Department of transportation as designated state agency.

The department, with the approval of the commission, is authorized to exercise those powers necessary for the state to qualify for rail service assistance grants pursuant to provisions of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 [Pub. L. 94-210; 90 Stat. 149; 49 U.S.C. 1651 et seq.], including authority to:

1. Prepare and recommend a state plan for all rail transportation and local rail services.
2. Administer and coordinate the state plan.
3. Provide in the plan for the equitable distribution of rail service assistance grants among state, local, and regional transportation authorities.
4. Promote and support safe, adequate, and efficient rail services for those railway lines receiving rail service assistance grants.
5. Employ sufficient trained and qualified personnel for these purposes.
6. Maintain adequate programs of investigation, research, promotion, and development in connection with these purposes and to provide for public participation therein.
7. Provide satisfactory assurances on behalf of the state that fiscal control and fund accounting procedures will be adopted by the state as may be necessary to assure proper disbursement of an account for federal funds paid to the state as rail service assistance grants.
8. Comply with the regulations of the secretary of transportation of the United States department of transportation affecting rail service assistance grants.
9. Do all things otherwise necessary to maximize federal assistance to the state under the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 [Pub. L. 94-210; 90 Stat. 149; 49 U.S.C. 1651 et seq.], and any amendments to it.

49-17.1-02.1. Department may authorize local rail projects.

For the purpose of promoting the public interest and local economic development, the department may utilize revenue generated under this chapter for the construction or improvement of railway freight transportation projects not otherwise eligible for assistance under the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 [Pub. L. 94-210; 90 Stat. 149; 49 U.S.C. 1651 et seq.] and which meet standards and specifications developed by the department.

49-17.1-03. Application for assistance.

The department, with the approval of the commission, may make application on behalf of the state for grants made available by the secretary of transportation under the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 [Pub. L. 94-210; 90 Stat. 149; 49 U.S.C. 1651 et seq.].

49-17.1-04. Use of public and private funds - Public service commission participation.

The department, with the approval of the commission, may utilize public and private funds appropriated by the legislative assembly in carrying out the purpose of this chapter. The department shall cooperate with the commission and with other states in the reorganization or reopening of any railway line which may have been abandoned by any railway corporation providing railway services within the state. In carrying out the authority conferred by this section, the department may enter into agreements, contracts, or other arrangements with the necessary parties to accomplish the purposes of this chapter.

49-17.1-05. Subsidy of railway lines.

The department, with the approval of the commission, may provide financial assistance, within the limits of funds appropriated by the legislative assembly, for the continuation of operations and maintenance of any railroad within the state, as provided for in the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 [Pub. L. 94-210; 90 Stat. 149; 49 U.S.C. 1651 et seq.], or other relevant federal legislation. The department or the commission may act as the agent in cooperation with the federal government, any local or regional transportation authority, local governmental units, any group of rail users, or any person in any rail service assistance program.

49-17.1-06. Railroad plan and proposals.

The department and the commission may develop and make available to interested persons feasibility plans, proposals, and recommendations for mergers, consolidations, reorganizations, and other unification or coordination projects for rail services which the department and the commission believe would result in a rail system which is more efficient and consistent with public interest.