

Comment Report

HSB 241

A bill for an act relating to the midwest interstate passenger rail compact, and including effective date provisions.(Formerly HF 99.)

Subcommittee Members: Graber-CH, Bergan, Jacoby

Date: 03/01/2021

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: House Lounge

Name: Jim Garrett

Comment: Chairman Graber, Representatives Bergan and Jacoby, Thank you for letting me submit these comments. The IARP supports HSB 241. Iowa finds itself in the beneficial position of being in the center of proposed passenger rail expansion. Governmental and advocacy groups are promoting passenger rail expansion both east/west and north/south through Iowa. The east/west expansion has completed much of its' federal studies and in fact has been engineered as far as Iowa City. While the north/south expansion is still in its' infancy, groups in Minnesota, Missouri and even Kansas are promoting its' development. There are additional prospects of bring passenger rail into Dubuque and continuing on to Waterloo. No matter which developments prevail, one thing missing is having Iowa at the table. Membership in MIPRC provides the network for all Midwestern States to collaborate and coordinate in any new or existing projects. Their involvement can include important crossboarder functions to ease coordination. Currently, of the 12 eligible States, three have no representation at all: South Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa. South Dakota can be excused. Iowa on the other hand is in the cross hairs, so to speak, of potential passenger rail expansion. Nebraska, for their part, has legislation pending to rejoin the compact. (Ohio also has legislation pending. While the State is not a current member, the Ohio Association of Regional Councils is a partner). Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg has spoken on several occasion of the Biden Administrations desire and aim to enhance and expand passenger rail. While expansion through Iowa may be years away, the planning starts now. The coordination starts now. Economic planning starts now. The development of the electric car and General Motors announcement of their intention to stop production of internal combustion engines by 2035, indicates a coming change in our transportation system. Long distance travel will be curtailed by car because of battery life. This will lead to more long distance travel by train and/or air. Iowa needs to be at the ready to capitalize on this coming economic windfall. Membership in the MIPRC is the vehicle needed to aid in that pursuit. Respectfully submitted, Jim Garrett