

307.26 Rail and water.

The department's administrator for rail and water shall:

1. Advise and assist the director in conducting research on the basic railroad problems and identify the present capability of the existing railroads in order to determine the present obligation of the railroads to provide acceptable levels of public service.
2. Advise and assist the director in the development of rail transportation systems for expansion of passenger and freight services.
3. Advise and assist the director in developing programs in anticipation of railroad abandonment, including:
 - a. Development and evaluation of programs which will encourage improvement of rail freight and the upgrading of rail lines in order to improve freight service.
 - b. Development of alternative modes of transportation to areas and communities which lose rail service.
 - c. Advise the director when it may appear in the best interest of the state to assume the role of advocate in railroad abandonments and railroad rate schedules.
4. Develop and maintain a federal-state relationship of programs relating to railroad safety enforcement, track standards, rail equipment, operating rules and transportation of hazardous materials.
5. Advise and assist the director in the conduct of research on railroad-highway grade crossings and encourage and develop a safety program in order to reduce injuries or fatalities including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. The implementation of a program of constructing rumble strips at grade crossings on selected hard surface roads.
 - b. The establishment of standards for warning devices for particularly hazardous crossings or for classes of crossings on highways, which standards are designed to reduce injuries, fatalities and property damage. Such standards shall regulate the use of warning devices and signs which shall be in addition to the requirements of section 327G.2. Implementation of such standards shall be the responsibility of the government agency or department or political subdivision having jurisdiction and control of the highway and such implementation shall be deemed adequate for the purposes of railroad grade crossing protection. The department, or the political subdivision having jurisdiction, may direct the installation of temporary protection while awaiting installation of permanent protection. A railroad crossing shall not be found to be particularly hazardous for any purpose unless the department has determined it to be particularly hazardous.
 - c. The development and adoption of classifications of crossings on public highways based upon their characteristics, conditions, and hazards, and standards for warning devices, signals, and signs of each crossing classification. The department shall recommend a schedule for implementation of the standards to the government agency, department, or political subdivision having jurisdiction of the highway and shall provide an annual report to the general assembly on the development and adoption of classifications and standards under this paragraph and their implementation, including information about financing installation of warning devices, signals, and signs. The department shall not be liable for the development or adoption of the classifications or standards. A government agency, department, or political subdivision shall not be liable for failure to implement the standards. A crossing warning or improvement installed or maintained pursuant to standards adopted by the department under this paragraph shall be deemed an adequate and appropriate warning for the crossing.

6. Apply for, accept, and expend federal, state or private funds for the improvement of rail transportation.
7. Advise and assist the director on studies for co-ordination of railway service with that of other transportation modes.
8. Advise and assist the director with studies of regulatory changes deemed necessary to effectuate economical and efficient railroad service.
9. Advise and assist the director regarding agreements with railroad corporations for the restoration, conservation or improvement of railroad as defined in section 327D.2, subsection 3, on such terms, conditions, rates, rentals, or subsidy levels as may be in the best interest of the state. The commission may enter into contracts and agreements which are binding only to the extent that appropriations have been or may subsequently be made by the legislature to effectuate the purposes of this subsection.
10. Administer chapters 327C through 327H.
11. Perform such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the director and the commission.
12. Advise and assist in the establishment and development of railroad districts upon request.
13. Conduct innovative experimental programs relating to rail transportation problems within the state.
14. Enter the role of "applicant" pursuant to the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976, United States Public Law 94-210, and take such actions as are necessary to accomplish this role.
15. Identify those segments of railroad trackage which, if improved, may provide increased transportation services for the citizens of this state. The department shall develop and implement programs to encourage the improvement of rail freight services on such railroad trackage.
16. Promote river transportation and coordinate river programs with other transportation modes.
17. Advise and assist the director in the development of river transportation and port facilities in the state.

[C75, 77, § 307.26, 327H.19; C79, 81, § 307.26]

86 Acts, ch 1245, § 1920, 1921; 90 Acts, ch 1233, § 13; 94 Acts, ch 1199, §50