

STATE and LOCAL FISCAL IMPACT

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Prime Sponsor(s): Sen. Garcia; Crowder Bill Status: Senate Local Government

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BILL TOPIC: SOUTHWEST CHIEF RAIL COMMISSION SPENDING AUTHORITY

Fiscal Impact Summary*	FY 2015-2016	FY 2016-2017
State Revenue		
State Expenditures	\$8.91 million	
General Fund	8.91 million	
FTE Position Change		
Appropriation Required: \$8.91 million - Department of Transportation (FY 2015-16).		

^{*} This summary shows changes from current law under the bill for each fiscal year.

Summary of Legislation

The bill provides \$8.91 million General Fund to support efforts to expand passenger rail service in southeastern Colorado. Specifically, it appropriates this money in FY 2015-16 to the Southwest Chief Rail Line Economic Development, Rural Tourism, and Infrastructure Repair and Maintenance Fund and authorizes its use by the commission of the same name. The bill also modifies current expenditure requirements for the fund by eliminating the prerequisites that:

- Kansas and New Mexico formally agree to make financial contributions to the project before the commission may spend money from the fund;
- Amtrak must add a regular stop in Pueblo within five years from the first commission expenditures, and instead requiring that Amtrak explore the potential benefits of such a stop, as it is expected to do for Walsenburg; and
- Amtrak, the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF), Kansas, and New Mexico commit to spending an average aggregate amount of at least \$15.2 million per year for each of the ten years from the first commission expenditures, and instead requiring that only Amtrak and the BNSF formally commit to spending at least \$16.0 million dollars towards repair.

Background

House Bill 14-1161 created the nine-member Southwest Chief Rail Line Economic Development, Rural Tourism, and Infrastructure Repair and Maintenance Commission in the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to oversee efforts by state and local governments, and cooperate with Kansas, New Mexico, Amtrak, and the BNSF to ensure continuation of existing Amtrak Southwest Chief rail line service in the state. The commission is comprised of

five members representing different groups and agencies, including the rail industry, tourist industry, and citizens of southeast Colorado. In addition, the commission has two appointed representatives of CDOT and Amtrak who advise the commission but are not voting members. Commission members serve without compensation, but receive reimbursement for expenses. The bill also created the fund that consists of monies including, but not limited to, gifts, grants, or donations received by the state from the federal government, local governments, public-private partnerships, or any other person; all moneys appropriated by the General Assembly; and funds resulting from any voter-approved ballot measure. The commission is repealed July 1, 2017.

State Expenditures

This bill increases state General Fund expenditures by \$8.91 million in FY 2015-16. The funds pass through the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to the Southwest Chief Rail Line Economic Development, Rural Tourism, and Infrastructure Repair and Maintenance Fund. The Transportation Commission does not include this fund in its revenue reports or budget allocation plans, therefore there is no fiscal impact to the CDOT.

Local Government Impact

Local governments in southeastern Colorado, specifically Lamar, La Junta, and Trinidad, are expected to benefit from efforts to continue passenger rail service in southeastern Colorado. To the extent that Pueblo and Walsenburg are developed into Southwest Chief stops, those municipalities are also expected to benefit from these efforts.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect upon signature of the Governor, or upon becoming law without his signature.

State Appropriations

For FY 2015-16, the CDOT requires a General Fund appropriation of \$8.91 million.

State and Local Government Contacts

Agriculture Counties Economic Development Local Affairs Transportation