

SENATE BILL 1807

By Campbell

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4;  
Title 54, Chapter 1; Title 64 and Title 65, relative to  
transportation.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 3, Part 23, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) The department shall establish an office of rail and public transportation within the department. The office must be established using existing resources and focus on passenger and freight rail and public transportation within this state.

(b) Responsibilities of the office of rail and public transportation may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Soliciting grants from the federal government and agencies and instrumentalities of the federal government or any other source;

(2) Assisting other appropriate entities, public or private, in the implementation and improvement of passenger and freight rail and public transportation services and the retention of rail corridors for public purposes;

(3) Representing and promoting the state's interests in passenger and freight rail and public transportation;

(4) Assisting other appropriate entities in the implementation and improvement of passenger and freight rail and public transportation services and the retention of rail corridors for public purposes if determined to be for the common good of this state or a region of this state;

(5) Determining present and future needs for, and economic feasibility of providing, public transportation and the retention, improvement, and addition of passenger and freight rail transportation in this state;

(6) Formulating and implementing plans and programs for the establishment, improvement, development, and coordination of public transportation and the development, retention, and improvement of passenger and freight rail transportation services and corridors in this state;

(7) Conducting research, policy analysis, and planning for rail and public transportation modes as may be appropriate to alleviate traffic congestion on highways by shifting traffic to passenger rail;

(8) Developing uniform financial and operating data on and criteria for evaluating all public transportation activities in this state;

(9) Developing specific methodologies for the collection of financial and operating data by public transit operators;

(10) Developing other information as may be required to evaluate the performance and improve the economy or efficiency of public transit or passenger and freight rail operations in this state;

(11) Providing training and other technical support services to transportation operators as may be appropriate to improve public transportation and passenger and freight rail services;

(12) Maintaining liaisons with state, local, regional, and federal agencies or other entities, private and public, having responsibilities for passenger and freight rail and public transportation programs;

(13) Administering state grants for rail transportation and public transportation;

(14) Promoting the use of passenger and freight rail services and public transportation to improve the mobility of residents of this state and the transportation of goods;

(15) Representing the state and the department on local, regional, and national agencies, industry associations, committees, task forces, and other entities, public and private, having responsibility for passenger and freight rail and public transportation;

(16) Representing the state's interests in passenger and freight rail and public transportation and assisting the department in the planning, location, design, construction, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, purchase, and rehabilitation of facilities and services that affect or are used by passenger and freight rail or public transportation;

(17) Preparing and reviewing state legislation and recommendations on federal legislation and regulations as directed by the commissioner; and

(18) Promoting public transportation and passenger and freight rail safety.

(c)

(1) The office of rail and public transportation shall determine the costs and requirements, including engineering, needed to implement passenger rail service on the following corridors, in order of priority, as recommended in the June 2023 report issued by the Tennessee advisory commission on intergovernmental relations (TACIR):

(A) Nashville to Chattanooga to Atlanta, Georgia;

(B) Memphis to Nashville;

(C) Chattanooga to Knoxville to Bristol;

(D) Memphis to Chicago, Illinois, via Carbondale, Illinois; and

(E) Nashville to Louisville, Kentucky.

(2) On or before February 1, 2025, the department shall submit a report detailing the office's determinations pursuant to subdivision (c)(1) to the transportation committee of the house of representatives and the transportation and safety committee of the senate, the chief clerk of each house of the general assembly, and the legislative librarian.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect July 1, 2024, the public welfare requiring it.