

CHAPTER 118**(HJR 72)**

A JOINT RESOLUTION establishing a Railroad Revitalization Task Force.

WHEREAS, Kentucky's freight railroads are a vital force in both the state and national economies and a crucial component of the Commonwealth's transportation system; and

WHEREAS, more than a dozen railroads operate in Kentucky, providing service across a 2,600-mile rail network that reaches all corners of the state; and

WHEREAS, railroads are hauling more commodities than ever before, carrying 16 percent of the nation's freight by tonnage and accounting for 40 percent of intercity ton miles and 28 percent of all ton miles; and

WHEREAS, since 1994, short-line railroads have moved over 9,000 car units of coal, which is equivalent to keeping one million coal haul truck loads off our state's highways; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the Commonwealth to help keep short-line railroads commercially competitive and financially viable; and

WHEREAS, other states have established creative financing options to assist short-line railroads in keeping vital rail lines operational and economically viable;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

Section 1. The Legislative Research Commission is directed to establish a task force to study the creation of a short-line railroad revitalization program. The task force shall study all aspects of the creation of a short-line railroad revitalization program, including but not limited to the following issues:

- (1) The current state of the short-line rail system in Kentucky, including an inventory of existing tracks and recent abandonments;
- (2) Maintenance needs on the current short-line system;
- (3) Options for financing a revitalization program, including the use of bonds, economic development financing, and dedicated taxes on locomotive diesel fuel; and
- (4) The experiences of other states in establishing and operating such a program.

Section 2. The task force shall propose new legislation, if appropriate.

Section 3. The task force shall be composed of 11 members. The members of this task force shall include:

- (1) Three members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- (2) Three members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- (3) The secretary of the Transportation Cabinet, or the secretary's designee;
- (4) The secretary of the Commerce Cabinet, or the secretary's designee;
- (5) The secretary of the Economic Development Cabinet, or the secretary's designee; and
- (6) Two representatives of the short-line railroads, to be appointed by the Legislative Research Commission.

Final membership of the task force is subject to the consideration and approval of the Legislative Research Commission.

Section 4. The Legislative Research Commission shall provide staffing for the work of the task force.

Section 5. The task force shall meet monthly and it shall convene its first meeting in July, 2007. The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the appropriate interim joint committee or committees by December 31, 2007, at which time the task force shall cease to exist.

Section 6. Provisions of this Resolution to the contrary notwithstanding, the Legislative Research Commission shall have the authority to alternatively assign the issues identified herein to an interim joint committee or subcommittee thereof, and to designate a study completion date.

Approved April 5, 2007.