Transportation Research Board Committee for the Study of Freight Rail Transportation and Regulation

Federal Railroad Administration
January 10, 2014
Background


- Section 9007 requires the Secretary of Transportation to enter into an agreement with the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct a comprehensive study of the Nation’s railroad transportation system since the enactment of the Staggers Rail Act of 1980.

- Statute requires agreement between the Secretary and TRB to be completed within 180 days after enactment.

- Not later than one year after the agreement, the Secretary shall transmit the results to the T&I committee and the Commerce committee.
The statute requires that the study address and make recommendations on:

1. the performance of the Nation's major railroads regarding service levels, service quality, and rates;
2. the projected demand for freight transportation over the next two decades and the constraints limiting the railroads' ability to meet that demand;
3. the effectiveness of public policy in balancing the need for railroads to earn adequate returns with those of shippers for reasonable rates and adequate service; and
4. the future role of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) in regulating railroad rates, service levels, and the railroads' common carrier obligations, particularly as railroads may become revenue adequate.
Issues to Completing the Study

- Statute authorized to be appropriated $1,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 and $800,000 for 2007 to complete the study.

- Since funding was not available, DOT/FRA entered into discussions with committee staff and suggest alternatives.

- Surface Transportation Board Study:
  - A Study of Competition in the U.S. Freight Railroad Industry and Analysis of Proposals that Might Enhance Competition
  - [www.stb.dot.gov/stb/elibrary/CompetitionStudy.html](http://www.stb.dot.gov/stb/elibrary/CompetitionStudy.html)

- USDA/USDOT Joint Study
  - Study of Rural Transportation Issues
  - [www.ams.usda.gov/AM Sv1.0/RuralTransportationStudy](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AM Sv1.0/RuralTransportationStudy)
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- October 2011 correspondence from Senator Rockefeller to Secretary LaHood states that $1,000,000 in funding is available.

- June 2013, FRA notified TRB about funding and study charge.

- September 2013, FRA and TRB signed a grant agreement to complete study.

- Now the clock is ticking on statutory time requirement.