

For Immediate Release

February 4, 2025

### **Establishing Updated Targets for Amtrak Cascades**

Taking the train will be an even more popular way to travel along the I-5 corridor if [HB 1837](#) and [SB5667](#) passes the State Legislature this winter.

When enacted, the Intercity Passenger Rail Improvement Priorities (HB 1837) would require the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Legislature to implement long-awaited improvements to Amtrak Cascades intercity passenger rail service.

This legislation is needed to address concerns that WSDOT's plans for Amtrak Cascades are not sufficiently robust. Commenting on these plans, House Transportation Committee Chair Fey and Ranking Member Barkis wrote that the WSDOT plan needs to drive transformative improvements in trip speed, reliability, and frequency that make traveling by rail along this corridor more convenient, accessible, and competitive with other modes of travel.

Key goals of the legislation include enhancing mobility options and improving the health of communities along the corridor. More and better Amtrak Cascades service will relieve congestion on I-5, reduce highway wear and tear, lower emissions, and boost the economies of station communities.

Specifically, the bill directs WSDOT to work with stakeholders to achieve:

- 2 hour-30 minute trip times Seattle-Portland, with a minimum of 14 round trips daily
- 2 hour-45 minute trip times Seattle-Vancouver, B.C., with a minimum of 5 round trips daily
- Minimum 88 percent on-time performance
- Timeline for completion by 2035

Dr. Breck Lebegue of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility remarked, "Shifting passengers and freight from roads to rails will substantially decrease fuel use and reduce health-threatening airborne particles."

"In a time of climate crisis and population growth, we need to take advantage of rail's energy efficiency and shift people and freight to existing rail routes," emphasizes Mary Paterson of Solutionary Rail.

"HB 1837 will re-affirm the state's commitments to on-time rail service and travel times that provide an alternative to congested highway driving, while benefiting freight rail, boosting economic vitality, and decreasing emissions," said Thomas White, Technical Advisor with Climate Rail Alliance.

The Rail Can't Wait campaign is a broad coalition of Washington organizations advocating for rail as a climate, health, and mobility solution.

For more information please contact:

-Mary Paterson, Solutionary Rail, 206-271-0251, [marycpaterson@gmail.com](mailto:marycpaterson@gmail.com)

-Breck Lebegue, WA Physicians for Social Responsibility, 210-414-8419, [brecklebegue@gmail.com](mailto:brecklebegue@gmail.com)

-Lael White, Climate Rail Alliance, 206-354-3616, [lcw@climaterailalliance.com](mailto:lcw@climaterailalliance.com)

END ###