



Rail Can't Wait Campaign

Priorities for the 2025 WA State Legislative Session

Prioritize mode-shift to rail for climate, health, and transportation benefits for all



WASHINGTON PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Kittitas Climate Action



Washington Clean Energy Coalition



1. Build Fast, Frequent, Reliable Service for Amtrak Cascades

<p>A. Recommit to goals for fast, frequent, reliable Amtrak service by 2030-2035¹</p>	<p>Enact the Rail Can't Wait Pre-Session Priorities for policy and capital investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pass the proposed Western WA Rail Act of 2025² to require 2.5 hr trip time SEA-PDX and 2.75 hr SEA-Vancouver B.C. (see RCW 47.79.020), minimum 88% reliability, and step-wise project implementation to be completed by 2030-2035 ● Integrate I-5 highway planning with rail revisions through Nisqually ● Build two modest-cost capital projects at Kelso and Centralia to improve reliability at station stops³
<p>B. Provide two major infrastructure improvements to the Amtrak Cascades corridor to enable 110 mph top speed and minimum 88% reliability</p>	<p>Fund state match and seek federal funding for two capital projects to help meet the proposed Western WA Rail Act of 2025 standards⁴ that further contribute to 2.5 hr trip times SEA-PDX and 2.75 hrs SEA-Vancouver BC, reliable on-time service, and reduced emissions and energy use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement rail alignment change on the Point Defiance Bypass south of Dupont, designed for 100 mph ● Build 110 mph dedicated passenger tracks along the existing corridor between Nisqually and Chehalis ● Re-negotiate a Master Agreement with BNSF⁵

2. Re-establish a Rail Office and Expand Rail Programming

<p>A. Re-establish a Rail Office</p> <p>B. Oversee funding for rail programs with near-term benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Re-establish a Rail Office dedicated to rail transportation, staffed with professionals in rail engineering and operations, to:⁶ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plan the rail element of the state transportation system ○ Implement, manage, and prioritize rail projects that can deliver benefits by 2030-2035 and meet emissions reduction goals (RCW 70A.45.020) ○ Apply for all federal grants dedicated to rail expansion and improvement, prioritizing existing routes (continued on page 2)
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¹ Amtrak Cascades Improvement Program 2024,

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qe7foGvxUJg1Qkrflbz64BnQMWnjbYUy/view>

² "Reliable, Time-Competitive Western Washington Rail Act of 2025" is detailed in:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gkewetQcN39YgeDosoCZwJ1ejV_sde5t/view

³ Est. cost \$3 million state match portion

⁴ These two major infrastructure projects (see the Long Range Plan for Amtrak Cascades (2006)) are an immediate priority, to reduce vehicle miles traveled (RCW 47.01.440) and greenhouse gas emissions (RCW 70A.45.020), relieve rail congestion, help meet the 88% on-time goal (2012 agreement between WSDOT & FRA; see 2019 State Rail Plan, pp. 83-4), enable increased trip frequency, and create service competitive with driving and flying.

⁵ The [WSDOT and BNSF Master Agreement](#) 2003-2023 allowed for 110 mph top speed.

⁶ Est. cost \$750,000 to support 4 Rail Office FTEs

<p>C. Provide organizational structures for professional and citizen participation in rail decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate Climate Commitment Act revenue and other applicable funds for near-term rail projects, prioritizing 2030-2035 completion timelines • Create a Rail Advisory Committee⁷ for stakeholders and partners • Create a Passenger Rail Opinion Group⁸
<p>3. Revive the Statewide Rail System</p>	
<p>A. Establish East-West Passenger Rail Service through Central Washington</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority to plan the Washington segment of long-distance service under the FRA Service Restoration initiative and Corridor Identification and Development (CID) program • Fund a benefit-cost analysis of restoration of state-sponsored east-west passenger rail service⁹ via Stampede Pass, connecting Seattle, Auburn, Ellensburg, Yakima, Tri-Cities, and Spokane
<p>B. Reconnect SE Washington Shortline Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase transportation resilience in SE WA through connectivity, capacity, and additional rail options for farmers and shippers • Commission a benefit-cost analysis for a Rosalia-to-Pasco Shortline Access Corridor using state-owned track as well as abandoned right-of-way¹⁰
<p>C. Electrify Rail</p> <p>Reduce climate emissions and diesel particulate emissions harmful to rail workers and fenceline communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the electrification of rail yards that began with appropriation for Tacoma Rail¹¹ • Begin planning mainline electrification similar to the car and truck Transportation Electrification Strategy (RCW 43.292), in order to coordinate between state agencies and localities and guide legislative action and priorities¹²
<p>D. Develop Rail Curriculum that will Educate the Next Generation of Rail Professionals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop professional rail curricula in state college and university engineering programs, utilizing historic and modern rail knowledge • Develop job-training programs for technical colleges to build a well-trained rail workforce • Fund a task force with academic and rail experts to develop a scope of work and budget for these specialized curricula

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⁷ Consider model in Oregon <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/rptd/pages/rac.aspx>

⁸ Model after Ferry Riders Opinion Group <https://wstc.wa.gov/programs/ferry-riders-opinion-group/>

⁹ Est. cost for BCA \$900,000

¹⁰ Est. cost for BCA \$400,000

¹¹ Eligible for CCA funds as an environmental justice project; est. cost \$250,000. Draft proviso for rail yard BCA [here](#).

Note: two Tacoma Rail locomotives are being replaced by zero-emissions battery-electric locomotives (ESHB 1125, Sec. 309 (11))

¹² Est. cost \$500,000