

House Research Act Summary

CHAPTER: 269

SESSION: 2008 Regular Session

TOPIC: Commuter rail authority

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Overview

This legislation gives authority to the Metropolitan Council to operate commuter rail lines that run from greater Minnesota into the metropolitan area, and establishes various powers and duties related to the commuter rail service.

- 1 **Exercise of power; commuter rail.** Establishes that the Department of Transportation has the authority to plan, design, and construct commuter rail under the current law commuter rail provisions in the Minnesota Statutes chapter on the Department of Transportation.
- 2 **Commuter rail operation and maintenance.** This section establishes various authorities and duties of the Metropolitan Council and the Department of Transportation related to commuter rail service that extends into the seven-county metropolitan area.

Subd. 1. General. Requires that the Metropolitan Council operate and maintain any commuter rail line that extends into the metropolitan area, once planning and construction are complete.

Subd. 2. Commuter rail equipment, supplies, and materials. Authorizes the Metropolitan Council to obtain commuter rail equipment and supplies. The line does not have to first be in service.

Subd. 3. Commuter rail improvements. Authorizes the Metropolitan Council to plan, design, construct, and provide equipment for any improvements to an existing commuter rail line over which the Metropolitan Council has authority.

Subd. 4. Procurement for commuter rail; best value alternative. Allows the

Metropolitan Council to use a “best value” method for awarding procurement contracts, which can be based on price, environmental considerations, quality, vendor performance, or other factors identified in the contract solicitation.

Subd. 5. Transfer of property and use rights. Requires that the Department of Transportation transfer ownership or provide access rights to the Metropolitan Council for any commuter rail facility that the Metropolitan Council is required to operate and maintain.

Subd. 6. Agreements with other parties. Allows the Metropolitan Council to enter into agreements with political subdivisions or private entities related to commuter rail operation and maintenance.

Subd. 7. Expenditure of funds and exercise of powers. Extends powers, including expenditure of funds, that exist under current law concerning the Metropolitan Council and the Metropolitan Transit Police, so that they apply outside of the metropolitan area when carrying out the council’s commuter rail responsibilities under this section.

Subd. 8. Application of section 174.82. Extends a provision authorizing contracting with class I railroads and providing certain liability protections to the railroad, so that they also apply to contracts made by the Metropolitan Council.

Subd. 9. Rights of employees. Provides that contracts made under the authority granted in this section do not affect certain employee rights.