

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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This bill directs the governor or a designee to initiate negotiations with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) regarding extending the Northstar commuter rail line to St. Cloud from its current terminus in Big Lake. It specifies various requirements for the negotiations, including:

- requiring at least one morning and one evening round trip from St. Cloud to Target Field in Minneapolis;
- providing authority to reduce the current number of round trips between Big Lake and Target Field;
- requiring continuation of the current system of BNSF handling trains crew and dispatch;
- making the St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission responsible for negotiations on use of the Amtrak station in St. Cloud and fare collections at that station; and
- prohibiting commitment of state funds for capital or operating costs of the extension, with negotiations permitted in order obtain funds from local or federal sources.