

January 20, 2019

Why ProRail Nebraska Supports LB 401
Which Would Re-establish Nebraska's Membership in the
Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact (MIPRC)

1. The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) brings together leaders from nine Midwest states (Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wisconsin) to promote, coordinate and support improvements to passenger rail and connecting bus services. See map on page 2. Nebraska's withdrawal from MIPRC last year put our state outside this planning process.
2. Passenger rail is playing a critical role in the region's transportation network. Therefore, rail projects need a federal partnership with states, similar to that of other modes of transportation, to assist with the capital investments necessary to build a modern, efficient passenger system in the Midwest. Rejoining the MIPRC would give Nebraska access to federal funding for passenger rail and connecting bus services.
3. Between FFY 2009 and FFY 2011, for the first time, Congress awarded states significant funding (\$10 billion) for intercity passenger rail improvements and planning. Under the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program, the Midwest was awarded \$2.5 billion. This funding is allowing MIPRC member states to strengthen and expand passenger rail service significantly. Much of this money has been used to upgrade Amtrak's Chicago – St. Louis route and the line to Rock Island (Quad Cities). The latter segment will eventually be part of the extension west through Iowa City and Des Moines to Omaha.
4. Unlike California that has several major rail corridors within one state, most of the Midwest rail corridors are multi-state. Therefore, the MIPRC provides a vital role coordinating the efforts of its states with federal agencies, Amtrak, suppliers, and universities. For example, MIPRC helped coordinate the joint Midwest – California corridor passenger equipment procurement program and is working with the University of Illinois Railway Civil Engineering Dept. on several passenger-related research projects.

It's vital to Nebraska's transportation future rejoin the **Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact** and get connected to the development of the Midwest Regional Rail System. And if the cost of MIPRC membership is a problem for the State, LB401 will allow private entities to help pay the cost.

Nebraska can surely afford its minimal annual expense (less than \$25,000 per year) to remain a member of the MIPRC and work towards balanced transportation options for the citizens of Nebraska.



*Indiana DOT is evaluating additional passenger rail service to South Bend and to Louisville.
 **In Missouri, current restrictions limit train speeds to 79 mph.