

Reasons why ProRail Nebraska supports Nebraska Legislative Bill 486 - Appropriate funds to the Legislative Council to pay dues under the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact (MIPRC):

- LB 486 has been introduced by Nebraska State Senator Annette Dubas, District 46, at the urging of ProRail Nebraska.
- LB 486 will have its public hearing before the Nebraska Legislature Appropriation Committee on Thursday, March 21st, at 1:30 PM in room 1003 of the Nebraska State Capitol.
- This bill would appropriate funds to pay the back dues dating from 2010 and current dues for the state of Nebraska to continue its membership in the MIPRC (See www.miprc.org/).
- Nebraska was among the Midwestern states to first join the compact which created a commission (MIPRC) when it was initiated in 2000. Ten states including Nebraska currently are members.
- The MIPRC brings member states' leaders together to promote, coordinate and support regional improvements to passenger rail service. This is accomplished through communication and coordination by its staff, its website and an annual meeting. It also advocates for the member states at the federal and regional levels for support for passenger rail service. Most important if given the opportunity by member states it supports current state efforts being conducted through state departments of transportation (DOT). Examples of this assistance are found in the Midwest Regional Rail System that includes the Chicago to Council Bluffs/Omaha Passenger Rail Project now being undertaken by the IA and IL DOTs which has not been supported by the state of Nebraska executive branch.
- The executive branch of Nebraska's state government has not supported or apparently seen the value of Nebraska's active participation in the compact. Funding for annual dues (\$15,000) could be through an established fund in the Nebraska Department of Roads. Such moneys have been withheld in the Governor's budget since 2010. The Legislature has gone along with this executive decision.
- Two of the state's four representatives on the commission are appointed by the Legislature from its body. The other two are appointed by the governor and currently are one from the Nebraska Department of Roads and one from a transportation union.
- Lacking a comprehensive and coordinated state department of transportation Nebraska's involvement in MIPRC provides its only link and source of information on the major federal and regional passenger rail initiatives and programs now underway. Without this connection the State of Nebraska will continue to fall behind in promoting and undertaking this important growing sector of the nation's transportation system. Such a failing will lead to missed opportunities for significant economic development in the state.
- By funding the state's annual MIPRC dues through the Legislative Council LB 486 sends a clear message to the state and its executive branch that the Nebraska Legislature understands and supports the economic value of improved and increased passenger rail service in Nebraska.

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