Public Law 95-580
95th Congress

An Act

To establish a Rural Transportation Advisory Task Force, and for other purposes.

Nov. 2, 1978
[S. 1835]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress hereby finds and declares that—

Rural Transportation Advisory Task Force. Establishment. 49 USC 1653 note.

(1) an adequate transportation system, made up of various modes of transportation, is essential to the overall success of the Nation's agriculture programs, to a sound program of rural development, and to the economic stability of the United States;

(2) the economical and efficient movement of agricultural commodities (including forest products) and agricultural inputs has been impeded by a shortage of railroad freight cars and motor trucks and by the deteriorated condition of many rail roadbeds throughout the United States;

(3) the economical and efficient movement of agricultural commodities (including forest products) and agricultural inputs is further threatened by the proposed abandonment by the railroad companies of thousands of miles of important railroad lines in the United States;

(4) the maintaining of an efficient and economical transportation system for agriculture and rural development in the United States has not received the priority attention which such system should have received; and

(5) the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Transportation have a responsibility to assume a more active role in representing the interests of agriculture and rural development in the United States in order to insure the availability of an adequate, efficient, and economical transportation system sufficient to meet the needs of agriculture and rural development in the United States.

SEC. 2. (a) There is hereby created in accordance with the provisions of this section a Rural Transportation Advisory Task Force (hereinafter referred to as the "Task Force"). 49 USC 1653 note.

(b) The Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Transportation (hereinafter referred to as the Secretaries) shall serve as Cochairmen of the Task Force, which shall consist of fourteen members in addition to the Cochairmen, appointed by the Secretaries on the following basis: Cochairmen and membership.

(1) one to be selected from a list of qualified individuals recommended by the Secretary of Agriculture;

(2) one to be selected from a list of qualified individuals recommended by the Secretary of Transportation;

(3) one to be selected from a list of qualified individuals recommended by the Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission;

(4) one to be selected from a list of qualified individuals recommended by the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, United States Senate;

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(5) one to be selected from a list of qualified individuals recommended by the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, United States House of Representatives;

(6) three to be selected from lists of qualified individuals recommended by carriers and associations of carriers, not to include more than one representative from each of the three transportation modes, rail, motor, and water;

(7) four to be selected from lists of qualified individuals recommended by the agricultural community, including agricultural shippers and associations of shippers; and

(8) two to be selected from lists of qualified individuals recommended by the academic community.

Recommendations from congressional committees.

(c) Within fifteen days after the enactment of this section, the Secretaries shall solicit recommendations from the Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission; the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, United States Senate; and the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, United States House of Representatives. The Secretaries shall cause notice to be published in the Federal Register soliciting recommendations from which to make the selections required under subparts (6), (7), and (8) of subsection (b) of this section.

Notice, publication in Federal Register.

(d) Vacancies on the Task Force shall be filled in the manner prescribed for original selections.

(e) Members of the Task Force who are full-time officers or employees of the United States shall receive no additional pay on account of this service on the Task Force. While away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Task Force, members of the Task Force shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in the Government service are allowed expenses under section 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

Travel allowances.

(f) The Task Force shall be dissolved forty-five days after the publication of the final report required under section 4 of this Act.

(g) The Secretaries shall furnish such supplies and clerical, administrative, and other support as they deem necessary to enable the Task Force to carry out its responsibilities.

Report, publication and dissemination. 49 USC 1653 note.

SEC. 3. (a) The Task Force may compile and publish an initial report which, if published, shall include recommendations for determining the essential transportation needs of agriculture on a continuing basis, for establishing a national agricultural transportation policy, and for methods of identifying impediments to a railroad transportation system adequate to meet the essential needs of the agriculture industry of the United States. Such report, if published, shall also include, but shall not be limited to, maps which identify the locations in the several States which the Task Force, on the basis of the importance of such locations within agricultural producing, marketing, or consuming areas, determines should receive railroad service: *Provided*, That this directive is not to be construed as requiring comprehensive line-by-line analyses of all branch lines.

Submittal to congressional committees.

(b) The report authorized in section 3(a) shall, if published, be published not later than one hundred and eighty days after the date of enactment of this Act. The Task Force shall submit copies of such report, if published, to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and shall provide for the widespread public dissemination of such report throughout the United States as soon as practicable after its publication.

(c) Within ninety days after the publication of the initial report described in section 3(a), or if such report is not published, within two hundred and seventy days after enactment of this Act, the Task Force shall announce dates for and hold public hearings at various locations throughout the United States, take such testimony and receive such evidence as it considers advisable for the purpose of obtaining the views of interested persons on such initial report or, if such report is not published, on recommendations for the final report required under this Act. Public hearings.

(d) Within one hundred and twenty days after the publication of the initial report described in section 3(a) or, if such report is not published, within three hundred days after enactment of this Act, the Task Force shall prepare and publish a summary of the testimony presented at such hearings, and shall provide for the widespread public dissemination of such summary as soon as possible following the publication thereof. Testimony summary, publication.

SEC. 4. (a) The Task Force shall prepare and publish, within four hundred and twenty days after the date of enactment of this Act, a final report including recommendations for determining the essential needs of agriculture on a continuing basis, for establishing a national agricultural transportation policy, for methods of identifying impediments to a railroad transportation adequate to meet the essential needs of the agriculture industry, and containing specific recommendations for a railroad transportation system adequate to meet the essential needs of the agriculture industry of the United States. In preparing such final report, the Task Force shall take into consideration the testimony received at the public hearing required under this Act. Final report, publication. 49 USC 1653 note.

(b) Copies of such final report shall be submitted to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate, the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives, and the Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission. The Task Force shall provide for the widespread public dissemination of such final report. Submittal to congressional committees and ICC.

SEC. 5. The provisions of this Act shall become effective October 1, 1978. Effective date. 49 USC 1653 note.

Approved November 2, 1978.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORT No. 95-1600, accompanying H.R. 12917 (Comm. on Agriculture).
SENATE REPORT No. 95-923 (Comm. on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 124 (1978):
June 8, considered and passed Senate.
Oct. 3, 4, H.R. 12917 considered and passed House; passage vacated, and S. 1835, amended, passed in lieu.
Oct. 15, Senate concurred in House amendment.