Overview

This bill requires the department of transportation to develop a rail corridor plan for southern Minnesota, including recommendations for grade crossing separation.

Section

1 Corridor improvement plan. Requires the department of transportation to develop a corridor improvement plan for grade crossings on the railway corridor that runs through Winona, Olmsted, Dodge, Steele, Waseca, Blue Earth, Brown, Redwood, Lyon and Lincoln counties.

Subdivision 1. Plan development. Requires development of the plan.

Subd. 2. Recommendations for improvements. Requires the plan to include crossing-by-crossing assessments to identify improvements needed at crossings with moderate levels of exposure. Requires the plan to identify all crossings that are candidates for grade separation at crossings that have a specified level of exposure of vehicles to trains, or that meet criteria in department rules.

Requires the department to consider crossings that are candidates for closing.
Subd. 3. Review. Requires the department to give railroads and local governments opportunities to participate in the plan development, and to allow local government review of the plan before the department (1) executes an agreement with an affected railroad company on an improvement in the plan, and (2) forwarding plan recommendations to the federal surface transportation board (STB).

Subd. 4. Final plan. Requires the department to submit the final plan to affected area transportation partnerships, railroads, and local governments. Provides that development of the plan does not bind the state or local governments to any implementation or funding obligations, unless otherwise provided in the plan.

Effective date. Makes section 1 effective July 1, 1999.

Requires the department to review community plans developed by local governments and railroads, for compliance with the department's criteria for crossing improvements. Provides that agreed-to plans take precedence over elements in the corridor plan that have been negotiated between the department and railroads.

Allows the department to provide comment to the STB or other government body on corridor improvement projects.