
Introduced by Senator Durazo
(Coauthors: Senators Grayson, Padilla, and Richardson)

September 25, 2025

An act to bring about modernizing the Metrolink commuter rail system

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

The Metrolink commuter rail service, run by the Southern California Regional Rail Authority(SCRRA), which serves Los Angeles county and its neighboring counties, Orange county, Riverside county, San Bernardino county, and Ventura county, provides a critical service for the residents traveling to and from these counties whether it be for work or travel.

The service, the majority of which runs on tracks owned by Class I railroads, Union Pacific and BNSF Railway in this region. Is commonly bogged down by aging equipment, infrastructure, and freight trains blocking rails the passenger trains run on, causing them to be delayed. A result of the service running on these tracks owned by the Class I railroads

Because of these service disruptions, the agency has been seeking a means to bring about improved quality in service. With overhead electrification being a common idea being floated around. As this would have the effect of shifting from diesel powered locomotives into using electric multiple unit(EMU) train cars powered by overhead catenary wires which the power cars will draw power from using a pantograph.

The benefits from this change could prove to be vital, as this change can result in improved service through these electric trains having faster acceleration, decreasing travel times, less pollution being emitted, as well as the framework needed to bring about a modernization of the entire Metrolink system.

The one line that can massively benefit from this modernization is the San Bernardino line, as for one, is one of the few lines that Metrolink owns the tracks for, making it so new infrastructure isn't at the mercy of the Class I railroads. Two, it sees a weekday ridership of 6,965 riders and a weekend ridership of 87,969. The highest ridership in both categories across the entire Metrolink system, giving more of an incentive for this line to be modernized

This bill would make the process of electrifying the San Bernardino line be put into motion which would then have the long-term goal of implementing said electrification and setting a precedent within the wider network to pursue electrification in order to improve service, decrease travel times, and cut down on pollution.

California Legislature — 2025 Simulation Session

Vote: majority Appropriation: yes Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known, and cited, as the San Bernardino line Electrification Planning Act.

SECTION 2. Agencies along the corridor of the line will need to collaborate in order to create a dedicated right-of-way(ROW) ownership for the tracks on the San Bernardino line

1. The current model of county-based ROW ownership makes it difficult for possible service improvements to be implemented unless all associated counties along the corridor prioritize investment in the infrastructure. Both new and existing.
2. There are only two counties along the line: Los Angeles county and San Bernardino county. Along with their respective agencies. Those being the SCRRA, San Bernardino Associated Governments(SANBAG), San Bernardino County Transportation Authority(SBCTA), and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority(LACTMA; or commonly, Metro). Making for a relatively simpler process of counties working together.
3. The agency that takes the lead over from the counties will need full-time and in-house project staff. Which include but are not limited to engineers, designers, and project managers.

Section 3. How funding will be secured

1. Currently the focus will be on putting forth a study on the feasibility and implementation of such a massive project.
 2. As such, funding can be secured from two sources: Measure M and federal grants
 - (a) Measure M is a half-cent sales tax measure that seeks to fund projects that deal with easing traffic and expanding public transportation.
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