



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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Indiana light rail bill dies in State Senate

Tri-State
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Where it Stands in the Statehouse) - Indiana State Representative Justin Moed's light rail bill is dead for now, but there is a chance it could be revived. State Rep. Moed, a Democrat from Indianapolis issued the following statement after the Indiana Senate killed his bill, House Bill 1080, that would have lifted the state law banning light rail projects in central Indiana: "I am disappointed that the Senate chose to play politics instead of working on job creation. Our region has a once in a generation opportunity to attract thousands of jobs for Hoosiers in need of work, but I am disappointed that the long-term benefits of this legislation were sacrificed for short-term political gain. Supporters of the bill believe the long-term impact of having an option for light rail would help city leaders better attract corporations like Amazon who are considering moving to Indianapolis. Transportation is an important factor when considering relocation or building new operations. Ease in transporting workers and potential customers is important to these corporations, and we must understand that mass transit should be part of those discussions. Instead of rolling up their sleeves to help city leaders find ways to address infrastructure needs and grow our city's economic development opportunities, they chose to play partisan politics. This approach solves nothing. House Bill 1080 received broad bi-partisan support in the House, passing by a 90-5 margin. This is the second time the Senate has dropped the ball on efforts to lure Amazon. Earlier this session, remember that they failed to pass an effort to include a protection for hate crimes in Indiana Code. But rest assured that this does not mean the end of this idea. If there is a chance to revive it before the end of this session, I will do it. The concept is supported by many groups across the spectrum, and they understand the importance of addressing these issues now." <http://www.tristatehomepage.com/news/local-news/indiana-light-rail-bill-dies-in-state-senate/1010812067>

Potholes threaten to sink repeal of light rail ban

Indianapolis Star
Tony Cook
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The city's pothole problem is threatening to derail an effort to repeal the state's ban on light rail projects in Central Indiana. Sen. Mike Delph, R-Carmel, has proposed an amendment that would require Indianapolis city officials to prove public transit money isn't needed to fill potholes. The amendment put the brakes on House Bill 1080, which would repeal a 2014 prohibition on public spending on light rail projects in Marion, Hamilton, Hendricks, Hancock, Johnson, Delaware and Madison counties. Senate Republicans will likely discuss the issue privately before the Senate convenes Monday at 1:30 p.m. Until now, the proposal to allow light rail had been moving through the legislature at a brisk pace. It has already passed committees in both chambers and the full

House. But the amendment puts the bill's sponsor, Sen. Jim Merritt, in a tricky spot. The Indianapolis Republican is also chairman of the Marion County Republican Party and in that role has routinely blasted Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett, a Democrat, over the condition of the city's pockmarked streets. Delph's proposal would prohibit Marion County from spending on light rail until the Indiana Department of Transportation certifies that Indianapolis officials have a plan to remedy winter potholes. The amendment threatens to complicate efforts to remove the light rail ban, which was already going to be challenging among Republicans who control the Senate. Supporters of light rail argue that the city needs all mass transit options on the table, especially if it is going to attract major new employers such as Amazon. The online retail giant announced in January that Indianapolis was one of 20 finalists for its second North American headquarters. The \$5 billion campus is expected to employ 50,000 workers with average salaries of more than \$100,000 a year. The city's bid, including any incentives and promises, have not been disclosed, but city economic development officials and the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce have been lobbying lawmakers for the ability to use public transit funds on light rail in the future, though they say there are no specific plans to do so.

<https://www.indystar.com/story/news/politics/2018/03/04/potholes-threaten-sink-repeal-light-rail-ban/390111002/>

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