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CONSENT

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Bill No: SB 1324  
Author: Blakespear (D)  
Amended: 3/23/26  
Vote: 21

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SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: 12-0, 4/14/26  
AYES: Cortese, Strickland, Archuleta, Arreguín, Blakespear, Dahle, Gonzalez,  
Grayson, Menjivar, Richardson, Seyarto, Wiener  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Valladares

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

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**SUBJECT:** Passenger and freight rail: LOSSAN Rail Corridor: working group  
report

**SOURCE:** Author

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**DIGEST:** This bill extends the deadline for the report from the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor working group on consensus recommendations relating to service in the corridor from February 1, 2026, to February 1, 2027.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Authorizes the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (JPA), San Joaquin JPA, and the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency to oversee state-supported intercity passenger rail service and defines each corridor. (Government Code (GOV) 2.3.5.1 Articles 5.2, 5.4, 5.6)
- 2) Defines the LOSSAN Rail Corridor as the intercity passenger rail corridor between San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Luis Obispo. (GOV § 14072)

- 3) Requires the preparation of an annual Business Plan, due to the Secretary by April 1 every year, for the corridor by each participating JPA board of directors. (GOV § 14070.4)
- 4) Requires the Secretary to convene a working group that includes, but is not limited to (GOV § 14072.6(b)):
  - a) LOSSAN Rail Corridor track owners;
  - b) LOSSAN Rail Corridor passenger and freight rail operators, including managing agencies, joint powers authorities, and transit districts responsible for rail services;
  - c) The county transportation commissions for the Counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura;
  - d) The Metropolitan Planning Organizations for the Counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura;
  - e) Business, community, transportation, environmental, labor, and civic organizations;
  - f) The California Coastal Commission; and,
  - g) The Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation.
- 5) Requires the working group to submit a report to the Legislature on or before February 1, 2026, addressing the long-term viability of comprehensive and coordinated passenger and freight rail services in and around the LOSSAN corridor. The report must include, among other items (GOV 14072.6(c)):
  - a) Strategies to increase rail service coordination and reduce disruptions or delays;
  - b) Alternative management and operations models or structures that improve intercity and regional rail services; and,
  - c) Changes to state statutes, rules, or funding necessary to improve the quality, performance, usage, management, or frequency of passenger rail services

with a focus on streamlining, clarifying, and improving existing processes or procedures.

This bill extends the deadline for the LOSSAN Corridor working group report from February 1, 2026, to February 1, 2027.

## Comments

- 1) *Purpose of this bill.* According to the author, “The LOSSAN rail corridor is 351 miles and connects six Southern California counties. Historically, the LOSSAN rail corridor is the busiest state-supported intercity rail corridor in the country and has had years of sustained passenger rail ridership growth. The last decade, however, has shown that the current funding and management models are no longer viable. The line is struggling with lower ridership since 2020, mounting infrastructure needs and changing travel demands. SB 1098 created a work group chaired by CalSTA with the rail line’s stakeholders and directed it to develop a report for the Legislature on needed reforms. The report, due on Feb. 1, 2026, has not been completed. This legislation restates the urgency for action while the report is being finalized.”
- 2) *LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency.* The Pacific Surfliner is one of three intercity rail services in California. It operates in the so-called LOSSAN corridor, defined as a 351-mile coastal corridor that runs from San Diego through Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo. Pre-COVID the service had 3 million annual riders with 26 daily trains, or 13 daily round trips. To accommodate the drastic decline in ridership during the pandemic, service was reduced to 12 daily trains. Despite track closures and the lack of ridership return post-COVID, the Pacific Surfliner service has, as of January 2026, returned to its pre-COVID level of 26 daily trains. Ridership however remains lower, with just under 2 million annual riders as of mid-2025.

In addition to the Pacific Surfliner service, the LOSSAN corridor is used by four different passenger and freight rail services, including the North County Transit District Coaster commuter rail, Metrolink, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, and the Union Pacific railroad. LOSSAN is currently the second busiest intercity passenger rail corridor in the United States, and the busiest state-supported Amtrak route. Pre-COVID, between Coaster, Metrolink, and Surfliner services, the LOSSAN corridor carried 8 million passengers a year. Based on numbers from fiscal year 2024, ridership across these services had only reached roughly 4.5 million. In addition to passengers, the LOSSAN

corridor transports over \$1 billion in goods via freight rail operators and is part of the Defense Department's Strategic Rail Corridor Network, providing access to military bases throughout San Diego.

Every year, the LOSSAN Agency is statutorily required to submit a business plan to the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) by April 1. The primary purpose of the business plan is to identify the major goals and objectives for the LOSSAN agency's management of the Pacific Surfliner, as well as the budget necessary to administer, market, and operate the service during the upcoming two-year period. As a result of SB 677 (Blakespear, Chapter 407, Statutes of 2023), future business plans are required to include a discussion of climate change issues for the corridor and highlight projects that are directly related to climate resiliency.

- 3) *Corridor of Concern.* The LOSSAN corridor, which runs directly on the coast in many areas, is suffering the impacts of sea-level rise, erosion, and weather-related events that have jeopardized the long-term resiliency of the corridor and, in some instances, ceased operations for up to months at a time.

Over the past decade, numerous incidents, including landslides, heavy rain, and storm surge have shifted tracks along the right-of-way, forcing extended track closures. For example, storm surge in September 2022 triggered a landslide that necessitated immediate track closure and nearly \$14 million in repairs. Such events have continued to occur, especially on the busiest section of the route between Orange and San Diego counties. In particular, track near the cities of San Clemente, Mariposa, and Del Mar has faced particular climate related challenges. Overall, such issues have cost tens of millions of dollars to address and have substantially interrupted service along the corridor.

- 4) *SB 1098 Reports.* In 2024 the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed into law, SB 1098 (Blakespear, Chapter 777, Statutes of 2024). The bill aimed to provide guidance, recommendations, and increase coordination between stakeholders to ensure the overall performance of the LOSSAN Rail Corridor. Specifically, the bill required the compilation of three different reports about various aspects of the corridor's performance.

One of these reports is to be prepared by the Secretary, with technical and subject matter assistance from the Secretary for Environmental Protection and the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency. This report is supposed to provide a baseline summary of the transportation and environmental conditions

along the LOSSAN corridor as of January 1, 2025. Another of these reports is a corridor performance report submitted by the Secretary in coordination with stakeholders and operators along the LOSSAN corridor. Neither of these reports have been prepared to date.

The last of these reports is to be prepared by a working group, convened by the Secretary, that consists of LOSSAN Rail Corridor track owners; LOSSAN Rail Corridor passenger and freight rail operators; the county transportation commissions for the Counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura; the Metropolitan Planning Organizations for the Counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura; business, community, transportation, environmental, labor, and civic organizations; the California Coastal Commission; and the Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation. Such a working group had previously been convened in 2024 before the passage of SB 1098.

This report is required to provide feedback on consensus recommendations regarding the long-term viability of comprehensive and coordinated passenger and freight services on the LOSSAN corridor. The report must include, among other things, strategies to increase rail service coordination and reduce disruptions or delays; alternative management and operations models or structures that improve intercity and regional rail services; and changes to state statutes, rules, or funding necessary to improve the quality, performance, usage, management, or frequency of passenger rail services. Furthermore, the working group must consider the known and expected impacts of recommendations on the coastal environment and local communities and engage in meaningful public engagement. This report was due February 1, 2026, but as of early April 2026 has not been released. Since the passage of SB 1098, the working group has only met twice, on February 19, 2026, and March 27, 2026. It plans to meet again at the end of April 2026.

- 5) *Waiting on reports.* As discussed above, none of the reports mandated by SB 1098 have been released. This includes the report from the LOSSAN Corridor working group on the long-term-viability of freight and passenger services on the corridor. SB 1324 extends the deadline for that report from February 1, 2026, to February 1, 2027. The author of SB 1324 is waiting for this report and plans to possibly incorporate recommendations from the report into this bill. CalSTA has estimated that the report will be released in May, however several working group meetings still need to be completed, and draft reports must be prepared before the final version can be released.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 4/27/26)

None received

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 4/27/26)

None received

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4/28/26 16:33:41

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