

Standing Committee Report Summary

The National Highways Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2011

- The Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture submitted its 173rd Report on 'The National Highways Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2011' on March 15, 2012. The Chairperson was Mr. Sitaram Yechury.
- The Bill seeks to amend the National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988. The Act established the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for the development, maintenance and management of national highways. The NHAI consists of a chairman, a maximum of five full time members and four part time members.
- The Bill seeks to expand the membership of the Authority. It proposes that the NHAI shall consist of a maximum of six full time members and six part time members.
- The Committee noted that it had in 2008 examined a similar amendment called the National Highways Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2008. The Committee noted that some of the major recommendations that it had made regarding the earlier 2008 Bill have not been incorporated in the present Bill.
- The Committee recommended that more financial and administrative powers should be given to the NHAI. It was of the opinion that merely adding professionals as part time members would not strengthen the organisation.
- As per the proposed Bill, at least two of the part time members should be non-government professionals with knowledge in financial management, transportation or any other relevant discipline. The Committee was of the opinion that the words 'any other relevant discipline' are vague. It recommended that the term 'any other relevant discipline' should be clearly defined.
- The Committee was of the opinion that appointment of people from private companies as members of the NHAI may lead to a possible conflict of interest.
- The Ministry had suggested that an officer with two years of service as Additional Secretary may be appointed as the chairman of the NHAI. The Committee did not find any justification in fixing the period of 'two years.'
- The Committee expressed its displeasure that the government had not made any rules providing for the powers and duties of the chairman and the members. The Committee was of the opinion that this has resulted in the NHAI functioning in an arbitrary manner.
- The Committee was of the opinion that the Bill will not serve its purpose unless the powers and duties of the chairman and members are clearly defined. It recommended the framing of rules and regulations prescribing the powers without any further delay.

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