

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6498

As of February 4, 1998

Title: An act relating to the contracting of department of transportation services.

Brief Description: Authorizing department of transportation contracting out of maintenance services.

Sponsors: Senators Horn, Wood, Benton and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/4/98.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Reema Shawa (786-7301)

Background: The Department of Transportation's (DOT) 1997-99 expenditure authorization for its maintenance program is \$242 million. This money funds activities such as roadway maintenance and repair, drainage maintenance and slope repair, roadside and landscape maintenance, and snow and ice control.

According to DOT, only 2 percent of routine maintenance activities is contracted out due to limitations in current law that restrict the department from contracting out work that has traditionally been done by state employees.

In contrast, DOT does contract out "project" work which is over \$30,000. Project work would include highway construction, alterations, repair, and improvements, but would exclude routine maintenance activities. If the estimated project cost is less than \$30,000, the department can use state employees to complete the work.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Department of Transportation is authorized to contract out maintenance services which have been historically done by state employees such as, but not limited to, snow and ice control, roadway maintenance and repair, and bridge and tunnel maintenance. The department's contracting out of maintenance services is exempt from the provisions in RCW 41.06.380 which states that only those services contracted out prior to 1979 can continue to be contracted out, provided that no such contract leads to the termination of classified employees or positions. The department is required to notify any exclusive bargaining representative who represents those employees whose employment status will be directly affected, to allow the representative the opportunity to offer alternatives to the proposed contract. If the department makes the decision to contract out maintenance services, the decision to do so is not bargainable.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 1998.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.