

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2370

As Reported by House Committee On: Transportation

Title: An act relating to including health in the state transportation system policy goals.

Brief Description: Including health in the state transportation system policy goals.

Sponsors: Representatives Billig, Jinkins, Cody, Liias, Fitzgibbon, Green, Lytton, Ryu, Moscoso, Ladenburg, Maxwell, Tharinger, Finn, Pedersen, Reykdal, Hansen, Hunt, Ormsby, Clibborn, Moeller, Kenney and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/25/12, 2/1/12 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds the goal of "health" to the established policy goals for the state's transportation system.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Billig, Vice Chair; Liias, Vice Chair; Asay, Eddy, Finn, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Jinkins, Johnson, Ladenburg, Moeller, Morris, Moscoso, Reykdal, Ryu, Takko, Upthegrove and Zeiger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Klippert, Kristiansen, McCune, Overstreet, Rivers, Rodne and Shea.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

There are currently six statewide transportation system policy goals for the planning, operation, performance of, and investment in, the state's transportation system. These policy goals are identified as follows:

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- Economic vitality: to promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy;
- Preservation: to maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services;
- Safety: to provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system;
- Mobility: to improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington;
- Environment: to enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment; and
- Stewardship: to continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) is required to establish objectives and performance measures for all state transportation agencies in order to assure that transportation system performance attains the six policy goals established in statute. The OFM was also required to submit to the Legislature and the Washington State Transportation Commission a baseline performance report on attainment of the newly established policy goals by December 1, 2007. Annual attainment reports are required to be submitted to the Legislature by October 1.

The Washington State Department of Transportation is also required to perform certain duties to support attainment of the statewide transportation system policy goals. These duties include: (1) maintaining an inventory of the condition of structures and corridors, as well as a list of structures and corridors in most urgent need of retrofit or rehabilitation; (2) developing long-term financing plans that sustainably support ongoing maintenance and preservation of the transportation infrastructure; (3) balancing system safety and convenience to accommodate all users of the system to safely, reliably, and efficiently provide mobility to people and goods; (4) developing strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled and considering efficiency tools to manage system demand; (5) promoting integrated multimodal planning; and (6) considering engineers and architects to design environmentally sustainable, context sensitive transportation systems.

Summary of Bill:

A seventh statewide transportation system policy goal is added as follows:

- Health: to improve the health of Washington's citizens and reduce health care costs by considering health implications when designing, building, and maintaining the transportation system.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Health care is a significant issue and a significant cost driver in our society. Twenty-five percent of Washington's citizens are obese, and obesity leads to a variety of health issues. There is a strong connection between obesity and commuting in cars. Daily physical activity has been engineered out of much of the transportation system, but it is realistic to get more people to walk, bike, and take transit by giving them access to these healthy choices. This bill is also an opportunity to breakdown some of the silos that exist, and work on this issue across state government.

Healthy community planning groups work with planners to increase healthy opportunities. Walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation help people to get the recommended amount of exercise. A well-planned transportation system also reduces accidents and their associated costs. Reducing the number of cars on the roads reduces pollution, which in turn reduces health costs. The goal promoted by this bill would thus help improve health in a variety of places and ways, and potentially save billions of dollars in health care costs.

We should not take walking on a sidewalk for granted. Without them, children are at risk when they walk. Residents in walkable communities are happier and healthier, and walkability can help with childhood obesity. If we had health as a policy goal 30 years ago, we would not need to have the Safe Routes to Schools program today.

For bikers, when there are no shoulders, they are at risk of accidents when they ride. Working with employers can also increase biking and improve the health of the work force.

Healthy impact assessments are a process for evaluating the built environment for the promotion of health. They are encouraged by a variety of organizations, including the World Health Organization. They look at all aspects of a project, including issues as diverse as the effect of noise and loss of sleep on people's health. Currently, seven of the top 10 causes of death are related to transportation, and accidents are the third leading cause of lost years of life.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Billig, prime sponsor; Ngozi Oleru, Public Health-Seattle and King County; Torney Smith, Spokane Regional Health District; Margaret Kitchell; Barbara Wright, Transportation Choices Coalition and Connecting Washington Task Force; Barbara Culp, Bicycle Alliance of Washington; Anthony Chen, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department; Randi Abrams-Caras and Dode Jackson, Cascade Bicycle Club; Lisa Quinn, Feet First; Paul Simmons, Washington Recreational Parks Association and Cheney Parks and Recreation; Victor Coleman, Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition; Nathan Weed, Washington State Public Health Association; Brad Banks, Washington State

Association of Public Health Officials; and Katherine Kolan, Washington State Medical Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.