

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 1677

C 309 L 91
Synopsis As Enacted

Brief Description: Updating population criteria for high capacity transportation programs.

By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Cooper, R. Fisher, Peery, Ogden, H. Myers, Morris, Jacobsen and Winsley).

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

Background: Legislation enacted in 1990 prescribes a process for local jurisdictions to follow in assessing the need for and planning high capacity transportation (HCT) systems. Agencies in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, Clark and Spokane counties were granted local option taxing powers to fund such systems. The taxing authority is an up to 1 percent sales tax, 0.8 percent motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) and a \$2 per month employer tax. This taxing authority is in addition to local option taxes for transit services. The 1990 census results will result in deletion of Thurston County from this group and addition of Skagit County.

HCT agencies conducting planning are required to establish a regional policy committee to guide the planning process. The committees are to reflect proportional representation based on population within the designated systems' service areas.

A 10-member Expert Review Panel (ERP), appointed jointly by the governor, the secretary of transportation and the chair of the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC), is responsible for oversight of HCT planning. The ERP is to evaluate the legitimacy of forecasts, cost estimates, and conclusions reached in the analysis of alternatives prepared regarding high capacity investments. The ERP is to report to the state appointers and to the agency whose planning is being evaluated.

Funding to conduct high capacity planning by transit agencies is provided from the High Capacity Transportation Account (HCTA). Account funds are generated from the margin created by a reduction in the existing authorized rate of MVET, from 0.815 percent to 0.7824 percent, which public

transportation agencies located in King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston counties may impose. These counties are identified by class of county, and the 1990 census results will delete Thurston County from this group and add Skagit County. The amount of the reduction for all systems, approximately \$7 million per biennium, is deposited in the HCTA.

Summary: The number of transit systems contributing to the High Capacity Transportation Account is expanded to include Clark, Spokane, and Kitsap counties.

Transit systems outside the central Puget Sound area may designate a metropolitan planning organization as the regional policy committee for high capacity transportation (HCT) planning.

Instead of 10 members, the number of members of an Expert Review Panel (ERP) may range from five to 10. For planning efforts involving counties adjoining another state or nation, the ERP is to be selected cooperatively with representatives of the adjoining state or nation. ERP comments and conclusions are to be provided to representatives of those entities.

Local taxing authority for HCT systems is extended to agencies in Yakima and Kitsap counties and removed from Skagit County.

A section to repeal RCW sections in Substitute House Bill 1201 common to this bill is added.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	83	15	
Senate	46	1	(Senate amended)
House	94	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 28, 1991