

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1868

*As Reported By House Committee on:
State Government*

Title: An act relating to transportation.

Brief Description: Restructuring administration of the department of transportation.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Anderson, Ferguson, Cantwell, G. Fisher, Pruitt, Wineberry, Phillips and Hine.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, March 6, 1991, DP.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
STATE GOVERNMENT**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 6 members:
Representatives Anderson, Chair; Pruitt, Vice Chair;
R. Fisher; Grant; O'Brien; and Sheldon.

Minority Report: *Do not pass.* Signed by 4 members:
Representatives McLean, Ranking Minority Member; Bowman,
Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler; and Moyer.

Staff: Linda May (786-7135).

Background: Under current law, the executive head of the Department of Transportation is the secretary of transportation. The secretary is appointed by the Transportation Commission. The secretary's salary is set by the governor. The secretary may be removed from office by the commission for cause.

The seven members of the Transportation Commission are appointed by the governor, with the consent of the Senate. Four members of the commission are to reside in Western Washington, and three members in Eastern Washington. No more than four members of the commission may be members of the same major political party. Members of the commission are compensated as a Class IV group: \$100/day.

The commission's functions, powers and duties include: 1) proposing policies to the Legislature to assure development and maintenance of a comprehensive and balanced statewide

transportation system; 2) determining for the department policies regarding coordination with federal, regional and local entities and plans, public involvement, administration of grants in aid, and management of department land holdings; 3) proposing to the governor and the Legislature budgets for the commission and for the department; 4) approving the issuance and sale of all bonds authorized by the Legislature for capital construction; and 5) adopting rules and policy directives necessary to carry out its functions.

Summary of Bill: The governor appoints the secretary of the Department of Transportation, with the consent of the Senate. The secretary serves at the pleasure of the governor. The governor continues to set the secretary's salary. The powers, functions, and duties of the Transportation Commission are transferred to the secretary.

Transportation Commission members are appointed by the governor without Senate consent. They no longer receive compensation except for travel expenses. The commission is directed to serve in an advisory capacity to the secretary and the department.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: Highways used to be proposed by legislation, with the potential for vote-trading. Under the current system, decisions to build highways are based on less political factors such as need. The Department of Transportation is insulated from politics under the current system. Good management does not necessarily follow from direct appointment. Department budgets and operations receive a tremendous amount of oversight now.

Witnesses: Duke Schaub, Association of General Contractors and the Washington Construction Industry Council (opposed).