

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1677

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, MARCH 28, 1991

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

SPONSORS: 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

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chairman; Nelson, Vice Chairman; Erwin, Madsen, Oke, Sellar, Skratek, Snyder, Thorsness, and Vognild.

Staff: Gene Baxstrom (786-7303)

Hearing Dates: March 26, 1991; March 28, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Legislation enacted in 1990 prescribed a process for transit systems to assess the need for and to plan 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/month employer tax. The 1990 census will delete Thurston County from this group and will add 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.

Oversight of high capacity planning is required by 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). 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 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 by a reduction in the

amount of MVET, from 0.89 percent to 0.7824 percent, for which public transportation agencies located in King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston counties can qualify. These counties are identified by class of county, and the 1990 census will delete Thurston County from this group and add Skagit. 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 through a reduction in the eligible motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) rate is changed to include those in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, Clark, Spokane, Yakima and Kitsap counties. Everett and Yakima Transit are not affected.

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 be 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 transit systems in Yakima and Kitsap Counties and removed from Skagit County. King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, Spokane, Clark, Yakima, and Kitsap counties are included.

RCW sections are repealed.

Language identifying counties is restructured.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

The reference to another nation is clarified to specifically identify a Canadian province.

TESTIMONY FOR:

Expands funding for high capacity transportation account. Provides flexibility in appointment of expert review panels and regional policy committees for high capacity transportation system planning.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Richard Hayes, Kitsap Transit; Chuck Williams, C-
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