

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5963

As Passed House - Amended
April 17, 1993

Title: An act relating to priority programming of multimodal solutions to address state highway deficiencies.

Brief Description: Providing for priority programming of multimodal solutions to address state highway deficiencies.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Vognild, Loveland, Newhouse and Nelson; by request of Department of Transportation).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Transportation, April 13, 1993, DPA;
Passed House - Amended, April 17, 1993, 96-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 26 members: Representatives R. Fisher, Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Jones, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Mielke, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle; Cothorn; Eide; Finkbeiner; Forner; Fuhrman; Hansen; Heavey; Horn; Johanson; J. Kohl; R. Meyers; Miller; H. Myers; Orr; Patterson; Quall; Sheldon; Shin; Wood; and Zellinsky.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Brough.

Staff: Gene Schlatter (786-7316).

Background: Anticipated transportation revenues will fall substantially short of the amount required to satisfy all transportation needs. Thus, in order to make the key tradeoffs and choices required for resource allocation decisions, RCW 47.05 prescribes that the Transportation Commission use a priority programming system to rank the selection of projects.

Under the current priority programming scheme, there are four construction program categories: system preservation and safety (Program A), interstate system (Program B), non-interstate capacity improvements (Program C), and bridge replacement and rehabilitation (Program H).

An overhaul of the Washington State Department of Transportation's (DOT's) current approach to programming and prioritization under RCW 47.05 is deemed necessary to incorporate and respond to recent changes in approach being implemented at the state and federal levels. For instance, there is no clear and explicit linkage between many of the policy objectives in the State Transportation Policy Plan, e.g., personal mobility, economic development, growth management, and environmental protection, and the existing programming and prioritization process.

In order to promote flexibility in the selection of solutions to identified deficiencies, regardless of mode or jurisdiction, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) has changed the federal funding program structure.

Also, requirements and policy objectives reflected in recent state and federal legislation concerning growth management, transportation demand management, and air quality require fresh approaches for addressing transportation needs.

And more generally, as highway programs become more complex and diverse, there has been a shift promoting management of existing capacity and multimodal solutions.

Summary of Bill: The intent section of RCW 47.05 is revised to promote solutions to deficiencies both on and off the state highway system, including non-traditional, multimodal solutions. The objectives of the priority programming system are: transportation of people and goods, preservation of the existing state highway system, support of the state's economy, and promotion of environmental protection and energy conservation.

Priority programming selection criteria reflect a regional emphasis as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) and ISTEA.

The priority programming system shall incorporate a broad range of solutions as identified in the statewide multimodal transportation plan including: highway expansion, efficiency improvements, nonmotorized transportation facilities, high occupancy vehicle facilities, transit facilities and services, rail facilities and services, and transportation demand management programs.

In order to target intrastate investments under ISTEA, programs are reduced to two categories -- preservation and improvement.

The Preservation Program shall consist of investments needed to preserve the existing state highway system and to restore existing safety features. A comprehensive six-year investment program for preservation shall identify projects for two years and an investment plan for the remaining four years.

The Improvement Program shall consist of investments needed to address identified deficiencies on the state highway system to improve mobility, safety, support for the economy, and protection of the environment. A comprehensive six-year investment program for improvements shall identify projects for two years and major deficiencies proposed to be addressed during the six-year period. Priority programming for the Improvement Program shall take into account the relative costs and benefits of candidate programs.

Analysis of investment trade-offs is established between the Preservation and Improvement programs. These choices are linked to policy and service objectives. Performance measures and monitoring systems shall be implemented for specific program objectives in order to determine the extent to which the program objectives were met. Protection of the state's investment is perpetuated by using lowest life-cycle costing, which is an important factor for determining investment priorities.

The Transportation Commission shall work with affected local jurisdictions in developing recommendations for the Legislature regarding weight restrictions and road closures affecting the transportation of freight and goods.

The selection of projects and services via DOT's priority programming policy shall be based upon an evaluation of life-cycle costs and benefits, as well as factual needs.

The commission shall, in consultation with DOT, set forth a needs analysis process for the identification of problems and deficiencies, the evaluation of alternative solutions and tradeoffs, and the estimation of the costs and benefits of prospective projects.

Major projects addressing capacity deficiencies which prioritize allowing for preliminary engineering shall be reprioritized during the succeeding biennium, based upon updated project data. Reprioritized projects may be delayed or canceled by the commission if higher priority projects are awaiting funding.

Major project approvals which significantly increase a project's scope or cost from original prioritization estimates shall include a review of the project's estimated

revised priority rank and the level of funding provided. Projects may be delayed or canceled by the Transportation Commission if higher priority projects are awaiting funding.

Duplicative language created by previous revisions is eliminated.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: A revision of the current DOT priority programming statute is necessary in order to ensure consistency with the federal program structure designated in ISTEA.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Skip Burch, Department of Transportation.