

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2889

As Passed House:
February 11, 1998

Title: An act relating to a plan for consolidation of the county road administration board, the transportation improvement board, and the transaid division.

Brief Description: Consolidating three transportation agencies.

Sponsors: Representatives Mitchell, Fisher, K. Schmidt, Radcliff, Zellinsky, Backlund, Skinner, Cairnes, Chandler, DeBolt, Sterk, Gardner, McCune, Hankins, Robertson, Romero, Mielke, Wood, O'Brien, Ogden, Murray, Boldt and Lambert.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation Policy & Budget: 2/3/98, 2/4/98 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/11/98, 94-1.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY & BUDGET

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Hankins, Vice Chairman; Mielke, Vice Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Fisher, Ranking Minority Member; Cooper, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Buck; Cairnes; Chandler; Constantine; DeBolt; Gardner; Hatfield; Johnson; McCune; Murray; O'Brien; Ogden; Radcliff; Robertson; Romero; Scott; Skinner; Sterk; Wood and Zellinsky.

Staff: Gary Lebow (786-7304).

Background: There are a number of state agencies whose responsibilities include providing technical assistance and funding to local governments for transportation-related activities. In 1997 the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC) was directed to conduct an evaluation of the services provided by the County Road Administration Board (CRAB), the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), and the TransAid Division within the Department of Transportation (DOT) to determine if there are any improvements that can be made to the organizational and funding structure that will result in greater efficiency and/or better service delivery to local governments.

CRAB provides technical service and administers grant programs to counties only. TIB administers a number of grant programs that are available to cities and/or urban counties. The TransAid Division provides technical services and administers grant programs that are available to cities and counties.

Oversight of the evaluation was provided by the Budget Development Working Group (BDWG) of the LTC, which consisted of 12 House and six Senate members.

Summary of Bill: The three agencies, TIB, CRAB and DOT, in cooperation with the LTC, the Office of Financial Management (OFM), and the chairmen of the respective boards and commissions, are required to submit to the LTC and OFM by December 1, 1998, a plan and time schedule to consolidate CRAB, TIB and the TransAid Division of the DOT.

The plan must attempt to achieve the savings identified in the consultant's report delivered to the BDWG of the LTC in January 1998. The plan may use up to 30 percent of the savings to increase technical assistance above current levels. The plan must also include an organization chart, where the consolidation will occur, the governing structure of the consolidated organization, the activities to be carried out by the consolidated organization, space requirements, accounts and program structure, and a transition process, including costs associated with the transition.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill only asks the three agencies to come up with a plan to achieve the savings identified in the consultant's report. It does not take away services that exist and should enhance the services being provided, as well as providing more money toward much needed road projects.

Testimony Against: CRAB would lose focus; larger agencies are not as attentive to the needs of their customers. CRAB, TIB and TransAid provide unique services and should not be consolidated. CRAB provides administrative and support services that are greatly needed by small rural counties.

Testified: Representative Maryann Mitchell, prime sponsor (pro); Helen Fancher, Grant County Commissioner and Washington State Association of County Commissioners (con); John Trent, Pierce County Department of Public Works (con); Bob Berg, Lewis County Public Services (con); and Bill Vlcek, city of Lynnwood (con).