

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 3117

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, March 2, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to a state-wide multimodal transportation plan.

**Brief Description:** Clarifying transportation plans.

**Sponsors:** Representative K. Schmidt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/24/98, 3/2/98 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Prince, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Goings, Heavey, Horn, Jacobsen, Morton, Oke, Patterson, Rasmussen and Sellar.

**Staff:** Ashley Probart (786-7319)

**Background:** In 1993 the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), in conformance with federal requirements, was required to develop a statewide multimodal transportation plan that would ensure the continued mobility of people and goods in a safe, cost-effective manner. This multimodal plan, commonly known as *Washington's Transportation Plan* (WTP), addresses transportation modes in two broad categories: a state-owned component and a state-interest component. The state-owned component guides state investment in state highways, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities and state ferries. The state-owned component includes several elements, including a capacity and improvement element, which is required to first assess strategies to enhance the operational efficiency of the existing system before recommending system expansion.

The state-interest component defines the state's interest in aviation, marine ports and navigation, freight rail, intercity passenger rail, bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways, and public transportation. The state-interest component is developed in conjunction with the appropriate public and private transportation providers to ensure the state's interest in these modes is being met.

The development of the different transportation components within WTP places a primary emphasis on the improvement and integration of all transportation modes to create a seamless intermodal transportation system for people and goods. There is a concern that WTP does not specifically prioritize congestion relief, the preservation of existing investments, traveler safety, and the efficient movement of freight and goods. In addition, there is concern that the state-owned component of WTP does not emphasize congestion relief within its capacity and operational improvement element.

The scenic and recreational highways element is also part of the state-owned component of the WTP. Current law directs the Department of Transportation to develop a scenic and recreational highways program that may identify entire highway loops or similar tourist routes that could be developed to promote tourist activity while protecting the scenic and recreational quality surrounding state highways. A federal requirement provides that all routes nominated as scenic byways must be officially designated by a state process. Currently only state highways with the designation "scenic and recreational highway" are eligible to compete for federal funding and recognition under the national program.

The Department of Transportation report, "Defining Washington's Heritage Corridors Program," prepared in cooperation with the Legislative Transportation Committee and state and county officials, was completed in January 1995. This report contains recommendations for the management of a statewide scenic byways program and is the basis for this legislation.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The statewide multimodal transportation plan is directed to place a primary emphasis on congestion relief, the preservation of existing investments, the improvement of traveler safety, and the efficient movement of freight and goods.

The state-owned component, capacity and operational improvement element is directed to place a primary emphasis on congestion relief.

The state-owned component, scenic and recreational highway element is clarified. A "scenic byway" designation program is created. The authority for designation and removal of a scenic byway designation is the responsibility of the Transportation Commission. Byways so designated do not become part of the scenic and recreational highway system unless approved by the Legislature. Participation in this program is voluntary.

If the scenic byway is not a state highway, all costs of designation are borne by the nominating entity.

By December 31, 1998, assessment criteria, a nomination process and removal procedures for scenic byways and local and regional byways must be developed by the Department of Transportation in consultation with affected state agencies, local governments, local planning organizations and special interest groups.

The Department of Transportation must develop a scenic byway management plan for a state highway nominated as a byway. Local, regional or other governmental entities must develop a scenic byway management plan for nominated byways under their jurisdiction.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The state-owned component, scenic and recreational highways element is clarified. A scenic byways designation program is created and is to be administered by the Department of Transportation and the Transportation Commission. This program also provides a mechanism for local jurisdictions to voluntarily compete for national scenic byway grant monies.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This bill provides appropriate policy direction from the Legislature to WSDOT.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Charlie Howard, WSDOT (pro).