

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5633

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, March 10, 1997

Title: An act relating to performance audit of the department of transportation.

Brief Description: Requiring a performance audit of the department of transportation.

Sponsors: Senators Strannigan, Long, Patterson and Benton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/19/97, 3/10/97 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5633 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Deccio, Vice Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Bauer, Fraser, Hochstatter, Long, Loveland, McDonald, Roach, Rossi, Schow, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Swecker, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Zarelli.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Background: The Department of Transportation was established in 1977 by legislation that combined the Department of Highways, the State Highway Commission, Toll Bridge Authority, Aeronautics Commission, Canal Commission, Board of Pilotage Commission, and other transportation-related functions and programs.

The Department of Transportation is governed by a policy- setting Transportation Commission consisting of seven members appointed by the Governor. The commission appoints the Secretary of Transportation, who serves as executive head of the department.

The Department of Transportation and Transportation Commission received 1995-97 appropriations of \$2.56 billion from state and federal funds for operating and capital purposes.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) is directed to conduct a performance audit of the Department of Transportation. In conducting the performance audit, JLARC is directed to identify the department's programs and functions and determine whether the program or function is effectively and efficiently achieving the results for which it was established. JLARC is also directed to evaluate the effectiveness of the department's governance structure and the Legislature's policy and fiscal oversight of the department. The bill is contingent on legislative appropriation.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: JLARC is provided greater flexibility in conducting the audit. The appropriation is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: A performance audit is needed to examine potential savings and efficiencies in the Department of Transportation. The central issue is whether the programs and functions are efficiently and effectively serving their intended purposes. The department is audited by several state and federal agencies and does strategic planning and performance measurement. The department would like to be included in the evaluation team and would like to be able to protect confidential data.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Gary Strannigan, prime sponsor; Gretchen White, DOT.