

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6346

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 4, 1998

Title: An act relating to withdrawal from a regional transportation authority.

Brief Description: Allowing withdrawals from regional transportation authorities.

Sponsors: Senators Johnson and Heavey.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/29/98, 2/4/98 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6346 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Gene Baxstrom (786-7303)

Background: Regional transit authorities are authorized under state law to provide high capacity transit services. The central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (RTA) was created by the action of the King, Pierce and Snohomish county councils. The authority board developed a high capacity transit system plan and defined the boundaries of the authority. Boundary requirements are that it include the largest-population urban growth area of each county, that it follow election precinct lines, and that if a portion of a city is determined to be within the service area, the entire city must be included within the boundaries of the authority. A process is set forth to annex areas to the RTA; however, no provision is made for boundary reduction.

This plan and the boundaries were approved by the three county councils. In November 1996, voters within the boundaries of authority approved a high capacity transit plan and authorized local option taxes to fund the plan.

At the same time that the voters approved the RTA, voters within a portion of unincorporated King County approved incorporation of the city of Covington. A portion of Covington lies within the boundary of the RTA, and a portion lies without the RTA boundary.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A city that lies partially within and partially outside the boundaries of a regional transit authority, and whose vote to approve incorporation occurred simultaneously with a vote to impose local option taxes for the authority, may request to be removed from the authority's boundaries. With approval of two-thirds of the authority board, the city is removed.

This provision expires December 31, 1998.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: A city created simultaneously with or after the vote forming a regional transit authority, which lies both within and outside the authority boundaries, would have been able to unilaterally withdraw from the authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The law required that when the Regional Transit Authority was formed, that cities be entirely within or outside the authority boundaries. The city was created at the same time as the Regional Transit Authority was approved by voters. Part of the city is in the taxing district and areas of the city just across the street are not.

Testimony Against: The Regional Transit Authority board should be included in the decision, only the unique situation of Covington should be addressed, and the succession provisions should expire.

Testified: PRO: Senator Johnson, prime sponsor; Rebecca Clark, City of Covington; Alice Matz, City of Covington; Douglas Toohey; NEUTRAL: Craig Olsen, Association of WA Cities; CON: Mary Gates, Regional Transit Authority member.