

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5064

As Passed Senate, March 10, 1999

Title: An act relating to confidentiality of certain public transportation information.

Brief Description: Protecting certain public transportation information.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Horn, Gardner, Benton, Long, Costa, B. Sheldon, Swecker, Patterson, Jacobsen, Shin, Oke, Morton, Eide, Spanel, Johnson, Goings, Sellar, Fraser, Thibaudeau, Franklin, Winsley, Rasmussen and McAuliffe).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/20/99, 2/11/99 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 3/10/99, 45-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5064 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Benton, Eide, Horn, Jacobsen, Johnson, Morton, Oke, Patterson, Sellar, Sheahan, T. Sheldon and Shin.

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7305)

Background: Each state and local agency is required to make all public records available for public inspection and copying unless the record is exempt from disclosure. The Legislature has enacted a number of such exemptions, including residential addresses and phone numbers of employees or volunteers of a public agency, and the residential addresses and phone numbers of public utility customers.

Current law provides an exemption for the names or other personally identifiable information maintained by public transit agencies regarding persons who participate in vanpool, carpool, or other ride-sharing programs or services. However, there is no express exemption provided for such information maintained by agencies regarding transit pass purchasers, persons who participate in paratransit services, or for persons who apply for or participate in other public transportation programs administered by transit agencies.

Summary of Bill: The names and other personally identifiable information maintained by public transit agencies regarding persons who participate in public transportation programs administered by the agency are exempt from public inspection and copying. Persons whose information is protected include: (1) transit pass purchasers; (2) users of paratransit services; and (3) current or former participants or applicants in a vanpool, carpool, or other ride-sharing program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill protects people who use public transit services. For instance, information that a person was participating in a ride-sharing service could tip off a thief that the house was unoccupied, even though a car is parked in the driveway.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Dan Snow, WA State Transit Assn.; Mike Harbour, Intercity Transit; Candace Carlson, King Co. Metro; Roland Thompson, Allied Newspapers of WA (concerns); Janeane Dubuar, Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility (concerns); Steve Lindstrom, C-Tran.

House Amendment(s): Personally identifying information of persons who acquire and use transit passes and other fare payment media, such as smart cards and magnetic strip cards, may be disclosed to (1) the news media when reporting on public transportation or safety and (2) governmental agencies or groups concerned with public transportation or safety.

Public entities and private entities under the public-private transportation initiatives that provide transit, ferry service, toll facilities or other transportation services may only use personal information obtained from the use of electronic toll payments, transit passes or other fare media for billing purposes and not to track individuals' use of the facilities or services.