

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1596

As Passed House:

March 9, 2001

Title: An act relating to transportation of persons with special needs.

Brief Description: Authorizing transportation for persons with special needs.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives G. Chandler, Wood, Mulliken, Fisher, Mitchell, Ogden and Santos).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/20/01, 2/26/01 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/9/01, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands authority for new county transportation authorities and new public transportation benefit areas allowing them to provide service to special needs persons only.
- Defines those with special needs to include persons who, because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, cannot transport themselves.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 28 members: Representatives Fisher, Democratic Co-Chair; Mitchell, Republican Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic Vice Chair; Ericksen, Republican Vice Chair; Hankins, Republican Vice Chair; Lovick, Democratic Vice Chair; Ahern, Anderson, Armstrong, G. Chandler, Edmonds, Haigh, Hatfield, Hurst, Jackley, Jarrett, Mielke, Morell, Murray, Ogden, Reardon, Rockefeller, Romero, Schindler, Simpson, Sump, Wood and Woods.

Staff: Gene Baxstrom (786-7303).

Background:

Several different units of government, including public transportation benefit areas and county transportation authorities, are authorized to provide public transportation services. There are presently 25 systems providing public transportation services in 26 counties of the state. All but two of these systems are funded through a voter approved local option sales tax.

State law is silent on whether a public transportation system can be for a specific class of users. The authorization for public transportation agencies, however, is for providing public transportation services to best serve the residents of the area. State law does provide that fares can be adjusted for specific routes, classes of service, or distinguishable classes of users.

Propositions to provide public transportation services in some areas have been turned down by voters. Some feel that there is majority support for providing services for only those persons with special needs.

Summary of Bill:

Specific authority is provided, allowing service to be provided to only those persons with special needs, for county transportation authorities established after January 1, 2001 and to public transportation benefit areas established after January 1, 2001 or which have not received voter approval for transit taxes.

The use of the sales tax for public transportation services provided by public transportation benefit areas and county transportation authorities is expanded, allowing it to be used for persons with special needs only.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary Fiscal Note available.

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

Testimony For: This bill provides flexibility for those areas not served by public transit to address the mobility of persons with special transportation needs.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Teresa Baird, State Independent Living Council; and Cherie R. Tessler, People First of Washington.