

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1596

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, March 27, 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: 3/27/01 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Eide, Finkbeiner, Jacobsen, Johnson, Kastama, McAuliffe, Oke, T. Sheldon and Swecker.

Staff: Dean Carlson (786-7305)

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.

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: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill will allow for a partial transit system for the elderly, developmentally disabled and the handicapped. Kittitas County has tried to get a transit system, but the voters have turned it down. However, when surveyed, they have been in favor of transit for the elderly, developmentally disabled and the handicapped.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Gary Chandler, prime sponsor; Bruce Tabb, Elmview (pro); Gordon Kirkemo, Department of Transportation (pro); Don Chartock, Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (pro).