

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5224

As Passed Senate, March 10, 2001

Title: An act relating to intercity passenger rail service.

Brief Description: Redeveloping King Street railroad station.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Prentice, Patterson, Haugen, Horn, Oke, Jacobsen and Kohl-Welles; by request of Department of Transportation).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/6/01, 2/19/01 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/10/01, 46-2.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5224 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Jennifer Ziegler (786-7316)

Background: The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has been working with the city of Seattle, King County, and private entities to coordinate the renovation of the King Street railroad station in downtown Seattle. Current renovation plans for the station include its continued use as a train station for Amtrak and freight service, as well as additional use as leased office space.

Summary of Bill: WSDOT is authorized to acquire real property on or around the King Street Station building. WSDOT is authorized to exercise all necessary duties to support and implement the planned renovation and operation of the King Street Station depot. WSDOT may contract with other public or private entities for the renovation, operation, and maintenance of the facility.

To facilitate tax exempt financing, WSDOT may lease from or contract with public or private entities for the renovation, operation, or maintenance of the King Street railroad station properties. The leases and contracts must not last longer than 50 years and WSDOT receives title to the property upon expiration of the lease or contract.

The King Street railroad station facility account is created. All funds appropriated or donated to the King Street railroad station must be deposited in the account. All receipts from departmental transactions associated with the King Street station must be deposited in the account.

Funds deposited in the King Street railroad station facility account must only be used for costs for management of the account, purchase and acquisition costs for King Street railroad properties, maintenance and operating costs of the King Street railroad properties, and capital improvement projects associated with the King Street station.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The Department of Transportation looked for all potential sources of funding and could not find additional revenue to pay for the project. The department has worked with the private nonprofit to finance the project. The nonprofit selected has experience across the country to assist governments in the financing of renovation projects. The state will be able to take over the outstanding debt at any time before the end of the lease. This legislation limits the risk to the state and permits the department to undertake a significant project when resources are scarce.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Prentice, prime sponsor; Jim Slakey, WSDOT; Helga Morgenstern, WSDOT; John Finkel, Railroad Station Properties; John Schwartz, Barientos; Doug Vaughn, OFM.