

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5743

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, March 8, 2001

Title: An act relating to investing in human resources for transportation.

Brief Description: Investing in human resources for transportation.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, Horn, Shin, Winsley, Oke and Kohl-Welles; by request of The Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/13/01, 3/8/01 [DPS, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5743 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama and McAuliffe.

Staff: Jennifer Ziegler (786-7316)

Background: The Legislature and the Governor formed the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation in 1998 to assess the local, regional and state transportation system; ensure that current and future money is spent wisely; make the system more accountable and predictable; and prepare a 20-year plan for funding and investing in the transportation system. The commission consisted of 46 members representing business, labor, agriculture, tribes, government, ports, shipping, trucking, transit, rail, environmental interests and the general public.

The commission made 18 recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature. Recommendation 10 directed the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to form partnerships with employer-employee organizations to develop apprenticeships and training programs to ensure the availability of a skilled workforce to deliver projects and services.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The apprenticeship council is created to work with the WSDOT, local transportation jurisdictions, representatives of labor groups, and representatives of the state's universities and community and vocational colleges to establish technical apprenticeship opportunities specific to the needs of transportation. The council must report to the Legislature on its recommendations and findings by December 1, 2001.

The WSDOT must work with local jurisdictions and representatives of labor groups to establish a human resources skills bank of transportation professionals. The WSDOT must issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2001.

The state-interest component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan and regional transportation plans must include a plan for enhancing the skills of the existing technical transportation work force.

The Department of Labor and Industries and the WSDOT must conduct an assessment of current practices used in setting prevailing wages for trades related to transportation facilities and transportation projects. A report must be submitted to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2001.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: A prevailing wage study requirement is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: There is a shortage of engineers and technical people who work in the transportation area. The three elements in this legislation are a good start in addressing a 20-year investment in transportation.

Testimony Against: The issue of prevailing wages has already been studied several times. The prevailing wage study requirement may be beyond the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations.

Testified: Don Briscoe, WFSE (pro); Jeff Johnson, AFL-CIO (con).