

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5755

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

Title: An act relating to the responsibilities of the transportation commission.

Brief Description: Adjusting responsibilities of the transportation commission.

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/12/01, 3/8/01 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5755 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, McDonald, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, T. Sheldon, Shin and Swecker.

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 spend 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, transit, rail, environmental interests, and the general public.

The commission made 18 recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature. In Recommendation One, the commission recommended the adoption of transportation benchmarks as a cornerstone of government accountability at the state, city, county, and transit district levels. In Recommendation Two, the commission recommended the establishment of a single point of accountability at the state level strengthening the role of the state in ensuring accountability of the statewide transportation system.

The Legislature created the Transportation Commission in 1977 to govern the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The seven-member commission appoints the Secretary of Transportation, proposes transportation legislation and budgets, approves the issuance of bonds for highways, and establishes the policies of the WSDOT in coordinating transportation planning and administering grants to cities and counties.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Governor must appoint the Secretary of Transportation with the consent of the Senate. The Washington State Department of Transportation

(WSDOT) must create subregion offices in the state to provide assistance and advice to urbanizes areas in congestion relief efforts.

The Transportation Funding Board (TFB) is created. The TFB is composed of 13 members, appointed by the Governor, serving six-year terms. The TFB must have representatives from the following areas: cities, counties, public transit, state ferries, the trucking industry, railroads, ports, the private sector, and special needs transportation. The Secretary of Transportation and a representative from the Office of Financial Management must serve on the TFB. The highways and local programs division of the WSDOT must provide staff support to the TFB.

The TFB must oversee the following accounts and programs: the rural arterial trust account, the urban arterial trust account, the arterial improvement program, the small city program, the city hardship program, the pedestrian safety and mobility program, and the transportation improvement account. The County Road Administration Board (CRAB) retains responsibility for the County Arterial Preservation Program. The TFB is also responsible for creating funding partnerships for the advancement and movement of freight.

The Legislative Transportation Accountability Program (LTAP) is created. The LTAP Committee must consist of four Senators and four Representatives from the Legislature. The LTAP must serve as a single, independent, statewide point of accountability for monitoring the performance of an integrated transportation system. On December 15 of each year, the LTAP Committee must provide the Governor and the Legislature with a statewide report on transportation systems at the state, county, and city levels, measuring each system's performance and progress in achieving the BRCT's benchmarks.

Statutes authorizing the Transportation Commission, the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, the Transportation Improvement Board and CRAB responsibilities regarding the rural arterial grant program are repealed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Transportation Funding Board is created. The Legislative Transportation Accountability Program is created. The Transportation Commission, the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, and the Transportation Improvement Board responsibilities are moved to the TFB and LTAP.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 1, 2001.

Effective Date: This act takes effect July 1, 2002.

Testimony For: This bill is reflective of a number of BRCT recommendations. The bill addresses the issues of a systemwide accountability approach and a central place to request funding for transportation projects. **Concerns:** It is important for CRAB to retain its regulatory functions. The Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board emphasizes an evaluation of each freight-mobility project. Without a separate freight board, the individual project emphasis will be lost. Port districts have invested significant funds in freight mobility projects and there is a concern that the investment will be lost. The freight board is working well and should remain in place.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Haugen, prime sponsor and Doug Hurley, BRCT. CONCERNS: Jackie White, WAC; Jay Weber, CRAB; Jay Lawley, WTA; and Pat Jones, Ports Association.