SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 5761

As of February 14, 2001

Title: An act relating to creation of congestion relief districts.

Brief Description: Authorizing congestion relief districts.

Sponsors: Senators Patterson, Horn, Prentice, Winsley, Finkbeiner, McAuliffe, Shin, Haugen, Franklin, Kohl-Welles and Kastama; by request of The Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation.

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/14/01.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Jennifer Strus (786-7484)

Background: The Governor and Legislature created the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation (BRCT) in 1998 to do the following: 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.

In Recommendation 5, the BRCT recommends the state invest in maintenance, preservation, and improvement of the entire transportation system so that the transportation benchmarks can be achieved.

Summary of Bill: The county legislative authority of a county with a population of 40,000 or more shall and any other county may, convene a congestion relief conference. The conference must evaluate the need for and desirability of the creation of a congestion relief district. If the county legislative authority decides a congestion relief district is needed, it must hold a public hearing on the issue. Before holding the hearing, the legislative authority must decide the boundaries of the district and furnish a copy of the boundaries to each incorporated city in the county.

When it is formed, a congestion relief district may not include only a portion of a city; every city must be either wholly included or wholly excluded from the boundaries of the district.

Once the congestion relief district is established, the members of the county legislative authority and the elected representative of each city within the district must select the governing body of the district.

The congestion relief district must develop a comprehensive congestion relief plan that includes the following elements:

1) A benchmark level of congestion reduction for the district;
2) The funding requirements necessary to meet the congestion reduction benchmark; and
3) the mechanisms for obtaining local funding must focus on user fees.

The congestion relief district has the authority to propose ballot measures for user fees; to sue and be sued; to contract with other entities to secure loans or advances for planning and feasibility studies, or the design, construction, operation or improvement of transportation facilities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary draft available.

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