

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6390

As of February 5, 2002

Title: An act relating to safety rest areas.

Brief Description: Allowing private entities to operate state-owned safety rest areas.

Sponsors: Senators Benton, Horn, Hewitt, Oke, Parlette, Long, Hochstatter, Hale, Swecker, Stevens, Roach, Johnson, Honeyford, McCaslin and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/7/02.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Jennifer Ziegler (786-7316)

Background: The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) owns and operates 42 safety rest areas. Twenty-nine safety rest areas are located on the interstate system, ten on the national highway system, and the remaining three are on state routes. Federal funds were used to build or rehabilitate the majority of the safety rest areas. Approximately 77 million customers visit Washington's safety rest areas each biennium. The biennial cost of maintaining and operating safety rest areas is approximately \$8 million.

Summary of Bill: WSDOT must adopt a comprehensive program to allow private entities to operate state-owned safety rest areas.

Private entities must offer equivalent services to those services currently offered at no charge. Prior to entering into a lease with an entity, WSDOT must contact food or beverage retailers, stores, lodging and service station businesses within one mile from the highway exits immediately before and after the rest stop location. WSDOT must give these businesses an opportunity to bid or otherwise negotiate with WSDOT to operate the facility. If no businesses respond with a reasonable offer within 60 days, WSDOT must open the bid process up to all interested entities.

WSDOT must take all necessary action to ensure the most favorable lease rates for the state. A lease must allow a nonprofit organization that previously conducted fund-raising activities on the premises to continue those activities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 4, 2002.

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