

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 6140-S2

March 21, 2002

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to section 504, Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6140 entitled: "AN ACT Relating to the creation of regional transportation investment districts;"

Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6140 allows voters of the three central Puget Sound counties to adopt a transportation funding and investment plan for their region. Section 504 would have rendered the entire bill - and perhaps even a majority vote in the region - null and void if a statewide transportation act containing new revenue does not become law by December 31, 2002. A statewide transportation act has been referred to the ballot for November 2002.

Section 504 of the bill creates legal issues that could thwart any transportation solution that the voters may approve. By vetoing this section, the three central Puget Sound counties will retain a dynamic new tool to begin to address their most pressing transportation needs, regardless of the outcome of the statewide referendum. The three central Puget Sound counties are major contributors to our state's economy, yet this same area suffers from some of the worst traffic congestion in the country. It should not be restrained from moving forward on its own if the rest of the state is unwilling.

Make no mistake, however: I pledge to work vigorously for the passage of the statewide transportation referendum. Even if the central Puget Sound region employs all of the new revenue authority provided by this bill, it is only a part of the solution. Statewide revenues are still essential for these three counties, as well as the rest of the state.

In addition, I will continue to work with the Legislature to expand the regional transportation funding authority, created by this bill, to other regions of our state.

For these reasons, I have vetoed section 504 of Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6140.

With the exception of section 504, Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6140 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor