

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1122

As Passed House:

February 3, 2003

Title: An act relating to transportation governance.

Brief Description: Streamlining transportation governance.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Morris, Murray, Romero, Hatfield, Kessler, Miloscia, Cooper, Simpson, Darneille, Lovick, Hunter, O'Brien, Veloria, Moeller, Eickmeyer, Hunt, Kenney, Schual-Berke, Fromhold, Conway, Wood, Linville, Berkey, Sullivan, McDermott, Haigh, Rockefeller, McCoy, Upthegrove and Ruderman).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/20/03, 1/29/03 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/3/03, 76-22.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Phases out the Transportation Commission, effective July 1, 2004.
- The Secretary of the Department of Transportation will be appointed by the Governor.
- Policy-setting functions of the Transportation Commission are transferred to the Legislative Transportation Committee.
- Administrative and operational functions of the Transportation Commission are transferred to the Department of Transportation.
- Requires the Legislative Transportation Committee to make recommendations and develop a transition plan for transferring remaining commission powers.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Rockefeller, 1st Vice Chair; Simpson, Vice Chair; Campbell, Clibborn, Cooper, Dickerson, Flannigan,

Hankins, Hatfield, Hudgins, Lovick, Morris, Romero, Sullivan, Wallace and Wood.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Jarrett, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Armstrong, Bailey, Kristiansen, Mielke, Nixon, Schindler and Woods.

Staff: Jeff Doyle (786-7322).

Background:

The Legislature created the Transportation Commission (Commission) in 1977 to govern the Department of Transportation (DOT). 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 DOT in coordinating transportation planning and administering grants to cities and counties. The Commission has authority to determine ferry fares, tolls, and other charges for use of the transportation system. The Commission is also responsible for development of a state transportation policy plan (20-year plan) that addresses all modes of transportation. Finally, the Commission is tasked with developing transportation system benchmarks under SHB 2304, enacted during the 2002 session.

In 1998 the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation (BRCT) was formed to analyze the state's transportation system and to make recommendations for reform and improvement. The BRCT found that in Washington, more than 468 governmental entities have authority for transportation planning, funding, management and construction of the system. They recommended that a single point of accountability for the state system be designated. To accomplish this, the BRCT recommended that the Secretary of the Washington State Department of Transportation be appointed directly by the Governor, thus making the Governor accountable for the performance of the state transportation system. The BRCT also recommended that the mission of the state Transportation Commission (who previously appointed the Secretary of DOT) be modified to make the Commission responsible for benchmarking and performance measures for the state transportation system.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:

Effective July 1, 2003, the Secretary of Transportation is appointed directly by the Governor.

The Transportation Commission (Commission) is dissolved effective July 1, 2004. The Commission's powers related to administration and operation of state highways and other assets are transferred directly to the DOT. The Commission's policy and planning responsibilities are transferred to the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC).

The LTC must conduct a study of the Commission's powers, and make recommendations for how best to carry out the Commission's functions. The report is due to the Legislature by December 15, 2003.

If the Legislature does not enact the LTC's recommendations, the Commission's powers will be transferred as directed in the bill, with policy-setting functions transferred to LTC and administrative or operational functions transferred to the Department of Transportation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2004, except for Sections 1- 4, which take effect on July 1, 2003.

Testimony For: This would create a single-point of accountability as envisioned by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation's recommendations.

Testimony Against: Many of the Transportation Commission's informal roles and functions (such as facilitating agreements among multiple jurisdictions) will be lost. Also, the Commission provides bi-partisan, geographically-diverse oversight of the Department of Transportation's activities.

Testified: (In support) Doug Hurley, Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation; Duke Schaub, Association of General Contractors; and Amber Balch, Association of Washington Businesses.

(With concerns) Aubrey Davis, Transportation Commission; and Peter Thein, Washington State Transit Association.

(Opposed) Paul Locke; and Lisa Kuruvilla.