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**Transportation Committee**

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**HB 2531**

**Brief Description:** Expanding authority for regional transportation investment districts.

**Sponsors:** Representative Murray.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Authorizes Regional Transportation Improvement Districts (RTIDs) for all counties.
- Broadens the definition of transportation projects eligible for RTID funding.
- Expands tolling options and taxes on motor fuel.
- Reduces sales tax rate to 0.2 percent and earmarks for transit related purposes .

**Staff:** Gene Baxstrom (786-7303).

**Background:**

Regional Transportation Investment Districts (RTIDs) were authorized under Chapter 56, Laws 2002 for the purpose of planning, selecting, funding, and implementing projects to address highway corridor needs in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Implementation requires at least two contiguous counties forming the district.

The council members of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties are the planning committee for development of a plan for transportation investments in the three county district and for identifying revenue options to fund them. County council members' votes are weighted proportionally to population. The Secretary of Transportation is a non-voting member.

Projects eligible for the RTID funding are capital improvements to: 1) highways of statewide significance including new lanes and earthquake repairs; 2) highways of statewide significance which, may include High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and associated multimodal capital improvements which support public transportation, vans, and busses; and 3) certain city streets, county roads, or highways that intersect with highways of statewide significance where those improvements are deemed by the Secretary of Transportation as more effective at relieving congestion than investing in highways of statewide significance; however, not more than 10 percent of district funds nor more than \$1 billion may be expended on these projects and one-third local matching funds for the projects are required. The use of funds for operations, preservation, and maintenance of the RTID projects is prohibited.

The RTID was initially granted various tax options including, up to 0.5 percent sales tax. In 2003, the RTID, or counties for RTID purposes were authorized a local option fuel tax at 10 percent of the state fuel tax rate. Both an RTID and counties, for city and county road purposes, may not impose the tax at the same time.

The RTID is authorized to collect tolls on facilities where lanes are added or the lanes are reconstructed by the RTID. The Department of Transportation may construct toll facilities that are sponsored by an RTID.

### **Summary of Bill:**

The RTIDs may also be formed in counties besides the King, Pierce and Snohomish county RTID. The districts may be multi-county, county-wide, or less than county wide. A city must be wholly within or outside a district. Planning committees for RTIDs are made up of county legislative authority members and mayors or city legislative authority members of cities within the district, with votes weighted on the basis of incorporated and unincorporated population within the district. The Secretary of Transportation is a non-voting member. Sixty percent of weighted votes are required for committee action.

The RTIDs outside Puget Sound are governed by members of the county legislative authority, acting ex-officio. The Secretary of Transportation is a non-voting member of the board. Sixty percent of the board membership is required for plan modification or placement of issues on the ballot. The governance of the multi-county RTID formed within King, Pierce and Snohomish counties are not affected.

The projects that an RTID may fund are expanded to include any project or program contained in the state or regional transportation planning organization plan. The prohibition on the use of the RTID funds for project maintenance and operations is removed. The local match requirement is eliminated.

The RTID planning committee in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties must consult regularly with and seek input from the county executive of each member county and the mayor and city legislative authority of the largest city in each county and any other cities over 100,000 in population.

The sales tax authority for RTIDs is reduced from 0.5 percent to 0.2 percent and its use is limited to public transportation, high-occupancy vehicle system and commute trip reduction purposes. A sales and use tax on motor fuel of up to 7.5 percent is authorized for RTIDs. Persons who pay the state sales and use tax on motor fuel are exempt from the RTID tax. The RTID's authority and county's authority on behalf of an RTID, to impose a local option fuel tax is expanded from 10 percent of the state rate to 20 percent of the state rate. Counties, for distribution of revenues for both the county and cities within the county, are authorized to impose their existing fuel tax of 10 percent of the state rate regardless of whether a fuel tax is imposed for the RTID purposes. Voter approval is required for all taxes.

The authority for roads upon which the RTID may collect tolls is expanded from those facilities which, the RTID plan expands or rebuilds, to local arterials and state or federal highways within the district. The roadways proposed for tolling and the purpose of the toll must be identified in the plan and the tolling must be approved by the Transportation Commission and the voters in the district.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 15, 2004.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.