

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1960

As of April 1, 2003

Title: An act relating to regional transportation governance.

Brief Description: Studying regional transportation governance.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Murray, Jarrett, Cooper, Dickerson and Hudgins).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Highways & Transportation: 4/1/03.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: Under federal law, metropolitan areas greater than 50,000 persons must have a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) established for the purpose of regional transportation planning. MPOs are designated either by: (1) the Governor with the concurrence of local government officials representing 75 percent of the affected population, including the central city or cities; or (2) as otherwise provided for by state or local law. MPO designations are prerequisites for receiving federal highway and transit funds. The MPO for the Puget Sound region is the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) which encompasses King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties.

State law authorizes the voluntary association of governments for regional transportation planning purposes in the form of regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs). In urbanized areas, the RTPO is the same as the federally-mandated MPO.

Within the PSRC planning area, transportation planning and/or services are provided by numerous public agencies including the Department of Transportation, counties and cities, public transportation agencies (including a regional transit authority and a monorail authority), and port districts. The newly authorized regional transportation investment district (RTID) has also formed a planning committee and is developing a regional plan to fund improvements in major highway corridors in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

Summary of Bill: Subject to appropriation, the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC) must study whether the creation of a Puget Sound regional transportation district, governed by an elected board, would lead to better use of transportation resources and improved transportation planning and governance in the Puget Sound region. The study, among other things, is to (1) review the region's current transportation planning and governance; (2) address the interaction between state, local, and regional transportation planning and governance; (3) examine the delegation of state transportation planning for the region to an elected board; (4) examine governance of the RTID by an elected board; and (5) examine governance of local transit districts.

A report to the Legislature is due by December 10, 2003.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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