

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESHB 2531

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Highways & Transportation, March 4, 2004

**Title:** An act relating to regional transportation investment districts.

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

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Murray, Wallace, McIntire, Dickerson, Hatfield, Rockefeller, Schual-Berke, Moeller, Chase, Conway and Wood).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Highways & Transportation: 3/4/04 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Horn, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Swecker, Vice Chair; Esser, Haugen, Jacobsen, Kastama, Mulliken, Murray, Oke and Spanel.

**Staff:** Dean Carlson (786-7305)

**Background:** Regional Transportation Investment Districts (RTIDs) were authorized under Chapter 56, Laws of 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 districts and for identifying revenue options to fund them. County council members' votes are weighted proportionally to population. The Secretary of Transportation is a nonvoting 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 (DOT) may construct toll facilities that are sponsored by an RTID.

**Summary of Amended Bill: Ballot Measure.** The law regarding the election process for RTID plans is clarified, specifically regarding the submission of a single ballot measure. Instead of permitting the RTID counties to "certify the plan to the ballot" and "put the plan before" the voters, the counties may submit to the voters a single ballot measure that (1) approves formation of the district, (2) approves the regional transportation investment plan, and (3) approves the revenue sources to finance the plan. Additionally, the RTID planning committee may draft the ballot measure on behalf of the participating counties.

Tolling Authority. The authority for facilities upon which the RTID may collect tolls is expanded to include approaches or connectors to bridges or viaducts that are new or reconstructed. The RTID plan must identify the specific location to be tolled and the purpose of the toll. DOT must administer the tolls and the Transportation Commission must set and impose the tolls in an amount sufficient to implement the plan and maintain and operate the facility in accordance to the plan.

Operations, preservation and maintenance may be included in the RTID plan as eligible expenditures for toll-related facilities where toll revenues have been pledged for the payment of contracts.

Tolling either Lake Washington bridge is authorized.

Funding. An additional three-tenths of 1 percent motor vehicle excise tax is added to the RTID's current motor vehicle excise tax authority. The motor vehicle excise tax imposed by the RTID does not apply to new vehicles.

Technical corrections are made to ensure that the RTID can bond against motor vehicle excise tax revenues.

**Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:** The engrossed substitute bill was not considered.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available on original bill.

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

**Testimony For:** None.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** No one.