

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5279

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Highways & Transportation, February 6, 2003

Title: An act relating to extending the expiration date of the transportation permit efficiency and accountability committee.

Brief Description: Extending the expiration date of the transportation permit efficiency and accountability committee.

Sponsors: Senators Prentice, Swecker, Horn, Haugen, Doumit, Finkbeiner, Benton, Esser, Morton, Johnson, T. Sheldon, Hargrove, Brandland, Honeyford, Jacobsen, Oke and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Highways & Transportation: 2/5/03, 2/6/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Michael Groesch (786-7434)

Background: The Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee (TPEAC) was created by Engrossed Senate Bill 6188, Chapter 2, Laws 2001, 1st special session. The committee was created with the goal of achieving transportation permit reform that expedites the delivery of transportation projects through a streamlined approach to environmental permit decisionmaking. The legislation charged the committee with the task of integrating current environmental standards. To carry out this task, the committee was directed to conduct three environmental permit streamlining projects, develop a one-stop permit decision-making process, seek federal delegation of permitting where appropriate, develop a dispute resolution process and develop various other permitting efficiency measures.

The committee includes nine voting members: four members of the state Legislature, three members from state agencies, and two local government representatives. Eight non-voting members include business, tribal, trade and environmental organizations. Federal agencies also participate.

An appropriation of \$3,296,000 was provided to the Department of Transportation for support of the committee during the 2001-03 biennium. Other agencies contributed to the cost of the effort through dedicated staff time and other in-kind contributions. The act creating TPEAC expires March 31, 2003.

Summary of Bill: The act is extended until March 31, 2009.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The committee is providing some good results but more time is needed to complete the committee's work. The requirement for reauthorization ensures accountability to the public through the legislative process. Concerns: Check points to the Legislature should be instituted to ensure that products are being delivered as promised. The length of time provided by the reauthorization may be excessive and a shorter deadline instituted. The underlying bill should be reviewed for possible improvements.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jerry Alb, WSDOT; Jackie White, AWC; Willy O'Neil, AGC; Grant Nelson, AWB; Bruce Wishart, People for Puget Sound.