

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5941

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

Title: An act relating to the Washington commerce corridor.

Brief Description: Studying the Washington commerce corridor.

Sponsors: Senators Swecker, Haugen, Horn, Oke and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Highways & Transportation: 3/5/03, 3/6/03 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5941 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Janice Baumgardt (786-7319)

Background: The existing I-5 corridor in Western Washington regularly experiences traffic congestion such that the efficient movement of freight, goods, services, and people is impeded. During the 2002 interim, a subcommittee of the Legislative Transportation Committee gathered information about a possible alternative corridor.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Department of Transportation is directed to contract out a study of the feasibility of adding an alternative north-south corridor. The corridor would begin in the vicinity of Lewis County and extend northerly to the vicinity of the Canadian border and would be situated east of State Route 405 and west of the Cascades. The corridor may include any of the following features: (1) ability to carry long haul freight; (2) ability to provide for passenger auto travel; (3) freight rail; (4) passenger rail; (5) public utilities; and (6) other ancillary facilities as may be desired to maximize the use of the corridor. The corridor must be developed, financed, designed, constructed, and operated by private sector consortiums. The corridor would be subject to a joint permitting process involving federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction if further pursued by the Legislature.

The department is directed to submit to the 2005 Legislature a study that identifies the key issues involved with the commerce corridor proposal.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 4, 2003.

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

Testimony For: The 2002 interim LTC Commerce Corridor Workgroup, for the most part, believes it is appropriate to take the next step forward in studying the corridor, which is what this bill does. It will take freight traffic off of I5. The moving of utility pipelines will be a great safety factor for the state. If the corridor project goes forward, taxpayers won't have to pay to build the corridor.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Swecker, prime sponsor; Lloyd Flem, Tony Trifiletti, Hal Cooper, Washington Association of Rail Passengers; John Doyle, WSDOT.