

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6711

As Passed Senate, February 12, 2004

Title: An act relating to membership on regional transportation planning organization boards.

Brief Description: Adjusting regional transportation planning organization board membership.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Highways & Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Horn, Jacobsen, Swecker, Prentice and Esser).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Highways & Transportation: 2/4/04, 2/5/04 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 2/12/04, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6711 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: Under current law, regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) are voluntary associations of local governments established for transportation planning purposes. In order to qualify for state planning funds, an RTPO containing a county with a population greater than one million must provide voting membership on its executive board to the state Transportation Commission, the state Department of Transportation, and the three largest port districts within the region. Additionally, the RTPO must assure that at least 50 percent of the local elected officials serving on its executive board also serve on transit agency boards or on a regional transit authority.

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) are federal designations established to provide nationally consistent definitions for collecting, tabulating, and publishing federal statistics for a set of geographic areas. Generally, an MSA reflects a core area containing a substantial population base, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core area. The largest city within an MSA, and an area within an MSA meeting certain population and employment criteria, are designated as a "principal city" within the MSA. The MSA criteria are similar to the criteria established for federal transportation planning purposes.

Summary of Bill: The minimum executive board voting membership for an RTPO containing a county with a population greater than one million is expanded to include all principal cities of an MSA within the RTPO region in existence on January 1, 2004. Additionally, the requirement for transit agency representation is removed.

Each RTPO must ensure that the unincorporated areas within its region are appropriately represented on all organization boards. The manner of representation may be determined by the organization.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Suburban populations are expanding within regional transportation planning organization areas, and therefore should be more fully represented on the organizations, including on the executive boards. Not only would this bill provide greater representation, but it also provides opportunities for presently unrepresented cities to be officers within the organizations. The bill provides a remedy for a longstanding membership representation problem. However, there are concerns with removing transit representation as regional transportation planning organizations receive federal transit funds, so having transit representatives on an executive board is good policy.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Horn, prime sponsor; Mayor Connie Marshall, City of Bellevue; Mayor Jim White, City of Kent; Rick Olson, Puget Sound Regional Council (neutral).