

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1864

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to citizen advisory committees for toll charge oversight.

Brief Description: Modifying citizen oversight of toll charges.

Sponsors: By Representatives Kilmer, Woods, Lantz, Appleton, Green and Hasegawa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/24/05, 3/3/05 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/11/05, 91-2.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/13/05, 44-0.

House Concurred.

Passed House: 4/18/05, 95-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Tacoma Narrows Bridge Citizen Advisory Committee (TNBCAC) members to be appointed proportionately from areas generating a majority of the trips across the bridge.
- The Citizen Advisory Committee is directed to look at the feasibility of providing discounts to frequent users, senior citizens, students and electronic transponder users.
- The Citizen Advisory Committee is directed to analyze variable or time of day pricing.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Wallace, Vice Chair; Woods, Ranking Minority Member; Skinner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Buck, Campbell, Curtis, Dickerson, Ericksen, Hankins, Hudgins, Jarrett, Kilmer, Lovick, Morris, Nixon, Rodne, Schindler, Sells, Shabro, Simpson, B. Sullivan, Takko, Upthegrove and Wood.

Staff: Gary Lebow (786-7304).

Background:

The Tacoma Narrows Bridge toll project is authorized in 47.46 RCW. Toll projects developed under 47.46 RCW require an advisory vote if there is opposition to the project demonstrated by the submission of petitions bearing at least 5,000 signatures opposing the project and delivered to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) within 90 days after project selection. The WSDOT is required to conduct a study of traffic patterns and economic impact to determine the boundaries of the affected project area. The registered voters in the affected project area are eligible to participate in the advisory vote. The affected project area for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge project includes all of Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap and Thurston counties and portions of Mason, Pierce and King counties.

A citizen advisory committee is required for each project developed under 47.46 RCW. The nine committee members are appointed by the Governor and must be permanent residents of the affected project area. The Citizen Advisory Committee advises the Transportation Commission, the toll setting authority, on all matters relating to the setting of tolls. No toll charge may be imposed or modified unless the Citizen Advisory Committee has been given at least 20 days to review and comment on the proposed toll schedule.

The project is currently under construction and is scheduled to begin collecting tolls in April, 2007. The members of the Citizen Advisory Committee have not been appointed at this time.

Summary of Bill:

The members of the citizen advisory committee must be appointed proportionately from those areas which generate the most traffic as determined by a traffic analysis.

The Citizen Advisory Committee is given additional direction to look at the feasibility of toll discounts for frequent users, senior citizens, students, and electronic transponder users. In addition to the discounts, the Citizen Advisory Committee is to look at the trade-off of providing discounts versus the early retirement of the debt. The Citizen Advisory Committee is also directed to look at variable or time of day pricing.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: When a tax or toll is levied on a group of citizens, local representation is paramount. The bill will make up for the error in the advisory election that had the bridge users being represented by people in Olympia and Sequim.

The Citizen Advisory Committee members should have knowledge about transportation, tolls and finance.

The Citizen Advisory Committee should also look at time of day or variable pricing. Verifying eligibility of discounts, such as senior citizens, could be an issue and might require these groups to use the manual toll lanes.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kilmer, prime sponsor; Bob Draggoo, Gig Harbor/ Peninsula Area Chamber of Commerce; Bryan Petro, Port Orchard Chamber of Commerce; David Pope, Washington State Department of Transportation; Mark Hoppen, City of Gig Harbor; and Terry Lee, Pierce County Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.