

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1864

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, March 30, 2005

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

Brief Description: Modifying citizen oversight of toll charges.

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

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

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/29/05, 3/30/05 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Jacobsen, Vice Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Eide, Esser, Mulliken, Oke, Spanel and Weinstein.

Staff: Hayley Gamble (786-7452)

Background: Under current law, toll projects developed under public-private partnership laws require a Citizen Advisory Committee. The Tacoma Narrows Bridge is the only current project that falls into this category. The nine committee members are appointed by the Governor and must be permanent residents of the affected project area. The Department of Transportation (DOT) is required to conduct a study of traffic patterns and economic impact to determine the boundaries 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 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. The Tacoma Narrows Bridge toll 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 Amended 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, electronic transponder users, senior citizens and students. Variable and/or time of day pricing will also be considered by the Citizen advisory Committee. In addition to discounts, the Citizen Advisory Committee is to look at the trade-off of providing discounts versus the early retirement of the debt.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Electronic transponder user discounts and consideration of variable and/or time of day pricing will be considered by the Citizen advisory Committee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: The Citizen Advisory Committee for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge has yet to be created, so it is easier to make changes at this point. Verifying age and education status would require use of manual toll booths. Variable time of day pricing should be considered. This bill would ensure those who are most impacted by the Tacoma Narrows Bridge project would have the 'loudest' voice on the committee. The committee will advise on various discounts for different user groups.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Kilmer, prime sponsor; David Pope, WSDOT.