

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5121

As Passed Senate, March 12, 2005

Title: An act relating to determining long-term air transportation needs.

Brief Description: Assessing long-term air transportation needs.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Keiser, Swecker, Poulsen, Schmidt and Haugen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/15/05, 3/3/05 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/12/05, 48-1.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5121 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: Under current law, counties and cities planning under the Growth Management Act must include in their comprehensive plans a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities, under the statute, are those facilities typically difficult to site, including airports. Additionally, no local comprehensive plan or development regulation may preclude the siting of essential public facilities.

Summary of Bill: The Aviation Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT Aviation) must conduct a statewide airport capacity and facilities assessment. The assessment must include a statewide analysis, regarding both commercial aviation and general aviation, of existing airport facilities, and passenger and air cargo transportation capacity. However, the primary focus of the assessment must be on commercial aviation. The assessment results must be submitted to the Legislature, the Governor, the Transportation Commission, and regional transportation planning organizations, by July 1, 2006.

After submitting the statewide airport capacity and facilities assessment, WSDOT Aviation must conduct a statewide airport capacity and facilities market analysis. The analysis must include a statewide needs analysis of airport facilities, passenger and air cargo transportation capacity, and demand and forecast needs over the next twenty-five years. A more detailed analysis must be conducted regarding the Puget Sound, Southwest Washington, Spokane, and Tri-Cities regions. The analysis must address the forecasted needs of both commercial aviation and general aviation. However, the primary focus of the analysis must be on commercial aviation. The analysis results must be submitted to the Legislature, the Governor, the

Transportation Commission, and regional transportation planning organizations, by July 1, 2007.

Upon completion of both the statewide assessment and analysis, the Governor must appoint an Aviation Planning Council to make recommendations, based on the findings of the assessment and analysis, regarding how best to meet the statewide commercial and general aviation capacity needs. The recommendations must include the placement of future commercial and general aviation airport facilities in regions determined to be in need of more improved aviation planning. The Aviation Planning Council must be composed of various aviation planning stakeholders.

If specific funding for the purposes of this act is not provided in the transportation budget by June 30, 2005, the act is null and void.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Washington aviation capacity and facilities planning does have critical needs gaps statewide. As such, it is important to have a phased-in approach to determining where these gaps exist. This legislation provides for a comprehensive study to determine both the state's existing airport capacity and facilities, and a market analysis to determine future capacity and facilities needs, with the intent being to make future aviation planning decisions based on factual needs. The Puget Sound Regional Council supports long-term planning regarding air capacity needs. Suggestions were made concerning the addition of certain members to the Aviation Planning Council created in the bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Keiser, prime sponsor; John Sibold, WSDOT Aviation Division Director; Rick Olson, Puget Sound Regional Council; Terry Finn, Port of Seattle; Linda Hull, Alaska Air Group.

House Amendment(s): The amendment: (1) requires that the two members of the general public serving on the Aviation Planning Council be familiar with airport issues, including the impacts of airports on communities, and that one be from Western Washington and one be from Eastern Washington; and (2) requires the Council to include public input in making its final recommendations.

Passed House: 93-2.