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**Transportation Committee**

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**HB 1773**

**Brief Description:** Regarding the imposition of tolls.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Clibborn and Jarrett.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Grants the Transportation Commission the authority to impose tolls on a facility or corridor where the legislature has approved a plan that assumed the imposition of tolls.
- Creates guidelines that the Transportation Commission must consider in imposing tolls.
- Requires that toll revenue generated by a particular facility or corridor be spent to improve, preserve, or operate the facility, operation, or corridor in which it is collected.

**Hearing Date:** 1/30/07

**Staff:** David Munnecke (786-7315).

**Background:**

The Tacoma Narrows Bridge is scheduled to begin collecting tolls this year, and the SR 167 high-occupancy toll lanes project is scheduled to begin collecting tolls in 2008. In both cases, the Transportation Commission is responsible for fixing the rates for the tolls, and is empowered to utilize variable or time-of-day pricing in fixing these tolls.

The Transportation Innovative Partnership Act of 2005, SHB 1541, required the Transportation Commission to conduct a statewide tolling feasibility study. The study explored the imposition of tolls on a series of illustrative examples, conducted attitude research regarding tolling with Washington voters, and proposed a series of policies to guide the imposition of tolling throughout the state.

The tolling study's proposed overall direction was that Washington should use tolling to encourage effective use of the transportation system and provide a supplementary source of transportation funding. In addition to policies elaborating on this overall direction, the tolling

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study also suggested that the Transportation Commission should develop policies and criteria for tolling and set toll rates. The Department of Transportation was proposed as the party responsible for planning, developing, operating, and administering toll projects and toll operations. Finally, the study suggested that toll collection systems throughout the state should be simple, unified, interoperable and should avoid the use of toll booths.

### **Summary of Bill:**

The Transportation Commission has the authority to impose tolls, including variable tolls, on a facility or corridor where the legislature has approved a plan that assumes the imposition of tolls. In determining whether to impose tolls and, if so, the amount of tolls, the Commission is required to consider the following guidelines:

- Overall Direction. Washington should use tolling to encourage effective use of the transportation system and provide a supplementary source of transportation funding.
- When to Use Tolling. Tolling should be used when it can be demonstrated to contribute a significant portion of the cost of a project that cannot be funded solely with existing sources or optimize the performance of the transportation system. Such tolling should in all cases be fairly and equitably applied in the context of the statewide transportation system and not have significant adverse impacts through the diversion of traffic to other routes.
- Use of Toll Revenue. Toll revenue should be used only to improve, preserve, or operate the transportation facility, corridor, or operation in which the revenue is collected.
- Setting Toll Rates. Toll rates, which may include variable pricing, should be set to optimize system performance, recognizing necessary trade-offs to generate revenue.
- Duration of Toll Collection. Because transportation infrastructure projects have costs and benefits that extend well beyond those paid for by initial construction funding, tolls should remain in place to fund additional capacity, capital rehabilitation, maintenance, operations, and to optimize performance of the system.

The Transportation Commission may create a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for any tolled facility or corridor. The nine members of a CAC are appointed by the Governor, and all members must be permanent residents of the affected project area. The CAC serves in an advisory capacity on all matters related to the imposition of tolls. If a CAC is created, a toll charge or variable tolling plan may not be imposed or modified unless the CAC has been given 20 days to review and comment.

On all tolling projects, the Department of Transportation is required to use and administer toll collection systems that are simple, unified, interoperable, and avoid the use of toll booths.

All revenue from a tolled facility or corridor must be used only to improve, preserve, or operate the facility, operation, or corridor in which it is collected.

The approval of the Transportation Commission is required before tolls may be imposed by regional transportation investment districts, transportation benefit districts, ports, towns, or cities.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on 1/29/07.

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