

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1694

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, March 26, 2007

Title: An act relating to the agency council on coordinated transportation.

Brief Description: Requiring the agency council on coordinated transportation to coordinate special needs transportation.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Flannigan, Upthegrove and Kenney).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/09/07, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/15/07, 3/26/07 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Marr, Vice Chair; Murray, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Clements, Delvin, Eide, Jacobsen, Kastama, Kauffman, Kilmer, Sheldon and Spanel.

Staff: Martha Hankins (786-7429)

Background: The Agency Council for Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) was created by the Legislature in 1998, to promote coordinated transportation services for persons with special transportation needs. Persons with special transportation needs fall into four broad categories: the elderly; children; persons with mental or physical disabilities; and persons with low-incomes. ACCT is responsible for activities designed to coordinate all available state and community resources for special needs transportation.

By statute, the council terminates on June 30, 2007, and the program ends one year later.

Summary of Substitute Bill: ACCT is reauthorized by extending its termination date to June 30, 2010. The program for agency coordinated transportation is repealed. The duties of the agency council for coordinated transportation are streamlined and modified. ACCT is directed to:

- identify and address barriers in laws, policies, operations, and procedures;
- focus on results;
- increase advocacy for transportation for persons with special needs;

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- review and recommend certification of local plans (developed with regional transportation planning organizations) based on meeting federal requirements and the implementation of coordinated human service and transportation plans; and
- report to the Legislature every other year, starting December 1, 2009.

Beginning July 1, 2007, each regional transportation planning organization must submit to the council, every other year, a report that addresses elements identified by the council.

The Joint Transportation Committee (JTC), with cooperation from ACCT, is directed to study and review the legal and programmatic changes and best practices necessary for providing effective coordinated transportation at the subregional level.

The JTC will review and consider other relevant model coordinated special needs transportation systems throughout the nation as a source of best practices for Washington State, including the ACCESS transportation system in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and conduct a comprehensive statewide survey of existing transportation resources for persons with special needs.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT(S) AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Transportation): A number of additions are made to the bill:

- The makeup of ACCT is modified; meetings must be open to the public and accessible; and the council is directed to seek input from persons with special transportation needs.
- ACCT is directed to establish statewide guidelines, applicable to transportation providers, for consistent and appropriate complaint processes. State paratransit and special needs grants will require applicants to have a complaint process in place that follows the guidelines established by the council. These grants follow a two-year funding cycle with applications due in January 2009.
- ACCT is directed to participate in state emergency and disaster planning by representing to the emergency management council the transportation concerns of persons considered at high risk.
- Regional transportation planning organizations submit plans to ACCT every four years but update project lists every two years.
- A number of technical changes are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: ACCT does important work but needs to be better. Transportation is especially important to people who depend on transit. The council needs more representation from persons who use and depend on public transportation on a daily basis. Users need a standardized way to file complaints or appeal eligibility decisions. Currently ACCT lacks enforcement power. Community transportation providers work with and support ACCT. ACCT has made a difference and moves Washington in the right direction, but needs to go further. Washington needs a comprehensive survey of statewide

resources and services. ACCT needs more staff support at WSDOT. The regional transportation planning organizations participate in coordination and would like a voting membership on ACCT. ACCT has been frustrated by lack of data, especially from DSHS and OSPI. ACCT is willing and able to contribute to state efforts for emergency planning as it relates to persons with special needs.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Heather Harper, ARC of Washington State; George Adam, Chair, Self Advocates in Leadership (SAIL); Robert Wardell, SAIL; Dale Colin, citizen; Angela Barbre, Community Transportation Association of America; Lon Wyrick, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Peter Thein, Washington State Transit Association; Michael Miller, Sound Transit; Genesee Atkins, Transportation Choices Coalition; Paula Hammond, WSDOT.