

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5084

C 422 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Updating rail transit safety plan provisions to comply with federal regulation.

Sponsors: Senators Murray, Swecker, Haugen and Delvin.

Senate Committee on Transportation

House Committee on Transportation

Background: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that states provide oversight of rail transit safety. In Washington, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is the agency responsible for safety oversight of rail transit systems.

FTA regulations covering fixed guideway rail transit apply to light rail, monorail, streetcars, and other rail-based transit systems. FTA regulations exclude trains operating on the interstate rail system. (The Federal Railroad Association separately regulates the interstate rail system.)

Rail transit operators develop safety plans and submit them to WSDOT for approval. WSDOT verifies that plans are consistent with federal guidelines, monitors safety reporting requirements, and investigates reported incidents.

Rail transit operators affected are:

- Sound Transit Link Light Rail;
- Seattle Center Monorail;
- Seattle South Lake Union Streetcar (after operation begins in 2007);
- Sound Transit Central Link Light Rail (after operation begins in 2009); and
- Seattle Waterfront Streetcar (when operation resumes).

Summary: Changes to existing statutes now match WSDOT standards and comply with updated federal requirements.

Recent changes in federal law require that each rail transit operator prepare two separate plans: a System Safety Program Plan (SSPP) and a System Security and Emergency Preparedness Plan (SEPP). Information in rail transit plans which is currently exempt from public disclosure continues to remain exempt.

In order to allow sufficient time to establish a system safety program, rail transit operators must submit SSPP and SEPP plans to WSDOT 180 days before the plans go into effect.

In response to updated FTA requirements, rail transit operators must notify WSDOT of reportable incidents within two hours.

WSDOT charges rail transit operators an annual fee to offset the costs associated with overseeing and reviewing the two plans. Fees imposed by WSDOT are limited to direct costs related to the department's responsibility overseeing the rail transit safety and security plans, and must be in proportion to the department's effort for each plan.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	1	
House	97	0	(House amended)
Senate	44	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 22, 2007