
Transportation Committee

HB 2721

Brief Description: Concerning commute trip reduction programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Upthegrove, Orwall, Kenney, Liias, Nelson and Chase.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorizes major employers whose employees commute to a single site or contiguous sites to submit a single joint commute trip reduction plan.

Hearing Date: 1/18/10

Staff: Kathryn Leathers (786-7114).

Background:

Commute Trip Reduction.

The Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) law was passed in 1991 and is incorporated into the Washington Clean Air Act. The goals of the program are to reduce traffic congestion, air pollution, and petroleum consumption through employer-based programs that decrease the number of commute trips made by single-occupant drivers.

Each county containing an urban growth area, and each city within an urban growth area with a state highway segment exceeding the 100 person hours-of-delay threshold, as well as those counties and cities located in any contiguous urban growth area, are required to adopt a CTR plan and ordinance for major employers in the affected urban growth area. At present, the state's nine largest counties are required to implement CTR plans, which includes the counties of Clark, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom, and Yakima.

"Person hours-of-delay" means the daily number of hours of delay per mile experienced by people in their vehicles during the peak period of 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.

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"Major employer" means a private or public employer, including a state agency, that has 100 or more full-time employees at a single worksite who begin their regular workday between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m.

Counties implementing a CTR plan may contract with other organizations, such as the local transit system or regional transportation planning organization, to assist, oversee, or implement the program within the county. To the extent a private or public employer worksite is not otherwise required to participate in a CTR program, voluntary participation is both allowed and encouraged.

Each major employer in a jurisdiction that adopts a CTR plan must develop and implement a CTR program which, among other things, includes a set of measures designed to achieve CTR goals. Examples of such measures include: giving preferential parking for high occupancy vehicles; instituting or increasing parking charges for single-occupant vehicles; subsidizing transit fares; providing vans for van pools; and authorizing flexible work schedules. Each local jurisdiction must review each major employer's progress and good faith efforts toward meeting CTR goals at least once per year. Major employers are also required to annually review employee commuting and progress made toward meeting commute trip reduction goals.

Within the Washington State Department of Transportation's (Department) budget, funding is provided for the Department to manage and administer the CTR program, to provide technical assistance to organizations required to implement the program, including the Department of General Administration and state agencies, and to distribute to local jurisdictions and employers to offset some of the implementation costs.

More than 1,110 worksites and more than 560,000 commuters statewide participate in the CTR program. It is estimated that in 2007, CTR employees in the central Puget Sound made more than 19,200 fewer vehicle trips each weekday morning than they did when their employers entered the program, and the absence of these trips reduced travel delay by an estimated 18 percent on average during the peak morning commute.

In 2009 the Legislature directed the Department to develop a joint CTR plan for all state agencies located in the Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater urban growth areas.

Summary of Bill:

The bill allows two or more major employers that are required to submit a commute trip reduction (CTR) plan to submit a single joint CTR plan if their employees commute to a single site or to contiguous sites.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/15/10.

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