
Transportation Committee

SSB 5128

Brief Description: Concerning statewide transportation planning.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, King, White, Swecker, Hobbs and Shin).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the convening, at least every seven years, of a three-person planning committee made up of members from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT); the Washington State Transportation Commission (Transportation Commission), whose member also serves as chair; and transportation planning organizations to develop and adopt a long-range statewide transportation plan.
- Repeals a variety of statewide planning requirements.
- Instructs the WSDOT to negotiate with the applicable entity regarding inconsistencies between state and local transportation plans.
- Directs the Transportation Commission to conduct biennial statewide transportation surveys.

Hearing Date: 4/13/11

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

There are a wide variety of statewide transportation planning requirements, including applicable reporting timelines, in state law. These are in addition to the various project-specific plans frequently required in biennial transportation budgets and the self-directed planning conducted within the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

For example, every four years the Washington State Transportation Commission (Transportation Commission) is required to prepare a comprehensive and balanced statewide transportation plan and submit it to the Governor and the Legislature. Under the statewide transportation plan, the WSDOT is required to develop a statewide multimodal transportation plan, which includes numerous statutorily directed specific modal plans. The statewide multimodal transportation plan must include both a state-owned facilities component and a state-interest component. The state-owned facilities component must consist of both the state highway system plan and the state ferry system plan. The state-interest component includes the specific modal plans, identified as aviation, ports, freight rail, intercity passenger rail, freight mobility, bicycle and pedestrian walkways, and public transportation.

In addition to statewide transportation planning requirements in state law, federal law requires states to develop a long-range statewide transportation plan that provides for the development and implementation of a state's intermodal transportation system. Additionally, both state and federal law contain various planning requirements directed at regional and metropolitan transportation planning organizations. Local governments also have various transportation planning functions and requirements.

The 2010 Supplemental Transportation Budget directed the Joint Transportation Committee to evaluate the preparation of state-level transportation plans. After including a review of federal, state, and regional planning requirements, the evaluation was to make recommendations concerning the appropriate responsibilities for preparation of plans, methods to develop plans more efficiently, and the utility of the state-level planning documents. The evaluation, and accompanying draft legislation, were submitted to the Legislature prior to the start of the 2011 regular legislative session.

Summary of Bill:

A variety of statewide planning requirements are removed from law, including the Transportation Commission's statewide transportation plan requirement and the WSDOT's requirement to develop a statewide multimodal transportation plan, along with its numerous modal-specific plans. These planning requirements are replaced with one statute requiring an ad hoc planning committee to develop a federally compliant long-range statewide transportation plan.

The planning committee must be convened July 1, 2013, and at least every seven years thereafter. The planning committee must be comprised of one member from each of the following entities: (1) the Transportation Commission, (2) the WSDOT, and (3) transportation planning organizations. The Transportation Commission member is also required to serve as the chair of the committee. The committee must adopt a long-range statewide transportation plan that includes various items, including a vision for the development of the statewide transportation system, an incorporation of the statutory transportation system policy goals, integration of various jurisdictional transportation planning, and the involvement of representatives of significant transportation interests. Once adopted, the plan must be submitted to the Governor for submission to the federal government.

Various agency duties are revised as follows: (1) the WSDOT must negotiate with applicable entities regarding inconsistencies between various state and regional transportation plans; (2) the Transportation Commission must perform biennial statewide transportation surveys; (3) the

WSDOT must biennially present its proposed transportation planning and research budget to the Legislature, including various detailed items; and (4) the Governor's proposed biennial transportation budget must track how it relates to the long-range statewide transportation plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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