

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1217

As of March 15, 2011

Title: An act relating to local authorities altering maximum speed limits.

Brief Description: Authorizing certain local authorities to establish maximum speed limits on certain nonarterial highways.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Ryu, Pedersen, Johnson, Klippert, Maxwell, Finn, Kenney, Santos, Springer, Ladenburg, Appleton, Lias, McCoy, Miloscia, Fitzgibbon, Kagi, Roberts and Billig).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/07/11, 92-0.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/14/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Katherine Taylor (786-7434)

Background: Local authorities may increase a maximum speed limit to 60 miles per hour or decrease the maximum speed limit to 20 miles per hour on a particular roadway on the basis of engineering and traffic investigations. Any altered speed limit goes into effect upon the erection of appropriate signs giving notice of the new maximum speed limit. However, the alteration of maximum speed limits on state highways within incorporated cities or towns by local authorities must be approved by the Secretary of Transportation. The Secretary of Transportation is authorized to establish speed limits on county roads and city and town streets as necessary to conform with any federal requirements, which are a required condition for the allocation of federal funds to the state.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Amendments): Cities and towns may establish maximum speed limits of 20 miles per hour on nonarterial highways in business or residence districts without an engineering and traffic investigation. However, prior to establishing maximum speed limits of 20 miles per hour, cities and towns must develop procedures regarding the establishment of such speed limits. Cities and towns must also consult the manual on uniform traffic control devices when establishing such speed limits.

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.

Maximum speed limits established without an engineering and traffic investigation may be cancelled within one year of establishment, and the previous maximum speed limit reestablished without an engineering and traffic investigation.

Additionally, cities and towns with a population of fewer than 3000 people may decrease the maximum speed limit on state highways within their respective jurisdictions, to less than the maximum speed currently permitted under law.

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: This bill reduces injuries and deaths and creates safer streets for bicycles and pedestrians.

OTHER: I support the original House bill but not the striking amendment; I want engineer studies when state highway speeds may be changed.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Davis Janis, Bicycle Alliance of Washington; Tony Gomez, Public Health Seattle and King Co.

OTHER: John Nesbit, WA State Department of Transportation.