

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 6215

As Passed Senate, February 14, 2012

Title: An act relating to establishing an optional transportation benefit district rebate program for low-income individuals.

Brief Description: Establishing an optional transportation benefit district rebate program for low-income individuals.

Sponsors: Senators Frockt, Kline, Nelson, Kohl-Welles and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/26/12, 1/30/12 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].
Passed Senate: 2/14/12, 29-20.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Fain, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Frockt, Litzow, Rolfes, Sheldon, Shin and Swecker.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Ericksen.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators King, Ranking Minority Member; Delvin.

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7429)

Background: A transportation benefit district (TBD or district) is a quasi-municipal corporation and independent taxing authority that may be established by a county or city for the purpose of funding transportation improvements within the district. Transportation improvement can include investments in city streets, county roads, new or existing highways of statewide significance, principal arterials of regional significance, high capacity transportation, and public transportation. A TBD may include areas within one or more than one county, city, port district, county transportation authority, or public transportation benefit area.

A TBD is authorized to impose the following taxes, fees, charges, and tolls:

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- up to a \$20 vehicle fee or up to \$100 with approval of a majority of the voters in the district;
- impact fees on the construction of commercial buildings;
- a sales and use tax of up to 0.2 percent with approval of a majority of the voters in the district; and
- vehicle tolls on state routes, city streets, or county roads, within the boundary with approval of a majority of the voters in the district.

Summary of Engrossed Bill: A transportation benefit district that includes a city with a population of 500,000 or more and that imposes a vehicle fee, sales and use tax, or tolls may establish a rebate program for the purpose of refunding low-income individuals up to 40 percent of the actual fee, tax, or toll paid by that individual. Low-income is defined as household income that is at or below 45 percent of the median household income, adjusted for household size, for the district in which the fees, taxes, or tolls were imposed.

A rebate program is established as an authorized use of vehicle fee, sales and use tax, and toll revenues collected by a transportation revenue district.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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 is a bill about local control and flexibility, giving transportation benefit districts more tools. It provides a technical clarification and does not require rebates or stipulate the type of rebate. It would not impose any costs to the state. Last year in Seattle a measure failed that would have greatly benefited Seattle neighborhoods. We hear from policy makers that there simply isn't funding from the state and this bill will help the city of Seattle and other cities by giving flexibility to local policy makers. There are negative consequences for not addressing serious safety issues which this bill will help to address.

Persons Testifying: PRO: David Miller, Sidewalks and Streets for Seattle; Karl de Jong, Admiral Neighborhood Assn.