

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5506

As of February 14, 2013

Title: An act relating to committing state and federal support to the safe routes to school program.

Brief Description: Concerning funding for the safe routes to school program.

Sponsors: Senators Billig, Eide, Frockt, Cleveland, Schlicher, Rolfes, Hobbs, Nelson, Fain, Parlette, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Hill, Shin, Murray, McAuliffe and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/13/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Amanda Cecil (786-7429)

Background: As part of the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) act of 2005, funding was provided for a Safe Routes to School program. In 2009 the Washington State Legislature identified that the program be located within the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The purpose of the program is to:

- enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school;
- make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
- facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

Summary of Bill: At least \$10.4 million of federal funds are dedicated to the Safe Routes to School program each biennium. The federal funds must come half from the Transportation Alternative program and half from the Highway Safety Improvement program.

At least \$6.8 million from the Highway Safety Fund must be dedicated to the Safe Routes to School program each biennium.

Appropriation: None.

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.

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 makes the children of Washington safer and healthier and physical health has been linked to academic achievement. This is an extension of the funding that is invested by local governments. It provides funding to complete sidewalks that children use to travel to and from school. This program allows children to join walking groups. They arrive at school energized and ready to learn. Transportation Alternatives program funds are also used for recreational trails and this will take funds from those. There is a great need for the safe routes program and state funds can be stretched farther than federal funds. Federal funds have performance targets and if they are not met the funds may be redirected.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Nona Snell, Recreation and Conservation Office; Kathleen Davis, WSDOT; Dianne White, Deborah Knight, City of Stanwood; Jennifer Cole, Feet First; Robin Randels, Community Advocate; Joe Zajonc, John Muir Elementary School.