

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5805

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Trade & Economic Development, February 21, 2013

Title: An act relating to projects of statewide significance for economic development and transportation.

Brief Description: Concerning projects of statewide significance for economic development and transportation.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs, Sheldon, Holmquist Newbry, Rivers, Dammeier and King.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Trade & Economic Development: 2/19/13, 2/21/13 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Braun, Chair; Smith, Vice Chair; Baumgartner and Holmquist Newbry.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Chase, Ranking Member.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Schlicher and Shin.

Staff: Jack Brummel (786-7428)

Background: In 1997, a process was enacted to expedite the development of industrial projects of statewide significance. In 2009, the Legislature changed the statute and industrial projects of statewide significance were renamed projects of statewide significance. Such projects must meet capital investment or job creation requirements. The job creation requirements are full-time employment of at least 50 people in rural counties or at least 100 people in urban counties.

Border-crossing projects and private projects investing in manufacturing or research and development may be designated as projects of statewide significance. Projects that will

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provide net environmental benefit or will further commercialization of innovations may also be so designated.

An application for designation as a project of statewide significance must be submitted to the Department of Commerce. The application must include a letter of approval from jurisdictions where a project is located and must commit to providing the local staff necessary to expedite the completion of a project. Counties and cities requesting a project's designation as one of statewide significance must ensure the participation of local officials on the public-private team expediting a project's completion.

Counties and cities with projects must enter into agreements with the Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA) and local project managers to expedite the processes necessary for the design and construction of projects. ORA must provide facilitation and coordination services to expedite completion of industrial projects of statewide significance. The project proponents may provide the funding necessary for the local jurisdiction to hire the staff required to expedite the process.

Summary of Bill: Private development projects that invest in the basic commodities of transportation, energy development, conservation, or efficiency may be designated as projects of statewide significance.

Job creation requirements are changed to full-time employment of at least 30 people in rural counties, at least 70 people in urban counties, or at least 70 people if the project will create jobs in both rural and urban counties.

The agreement between ORA and cities or counties must include provisions relating to completing a coordinated and comprehensive review of a project of statewide significance.

The application process is changed. Upon a proponent's application, responsible local jurisdictions must provide a letter stating whether the jurisdiction joins the request for designation and whether they have or will hire staff to expedite the processes necessary to the completion of the project.

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: Resolving permitting issues can create jobs. It would be good to see some projects get designated.

CON: The changes are inconsistent with existing law. This would remove the requirement for the approval of local jurisdictions and eliminate net environmental benefit. This could expedite the permitting of facilities to export coal.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Josh Swanson, International Union of Operating Engineers.

CON: April Putney, Futurewise; Miguel Perez-Gibson, Climate Solutions.