

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1404

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to requiring a bistate work group for certain transportation projects.

Brief Description: Requiring a bistate work group for certain transportation projects.

Sponsors: Representatives Wylie, Moeller and Tarleton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/5/15, 2/9/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Defines a bistate megaproject as a highway construction project valued at \$500 million or more that extends across the border between Washington and another state.
- Requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to notify the House and Senate Transportation Committees when it initiates work with another state to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a bistate megaproject.
- Directs the Legislature to consult with the Pacific Northwest Economic Region to determine effective strategies for establishing bistate work groups prior to establishing a work group.
- Requires the WSDOT to establish a bistate megaproject work group in conjunction with developing the EIS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Gregerson, McBride, Moeller, Ortiz-Self, Riccelli, Sells, Takko and Tarleton.

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.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Harmsworth, Hayes, Kochmar, Pike, Shea, Wilson, Young and Zeiger.

Staff: Alyssa Ball (786-7140).

Background:

The Interstate 5 (I-5) Bridge crosses the Columbia River and connects Vancouver, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, with two identical bridge structures. One bridge structure carries traffic northbound to Vancouver, and the other bridge structure carries traffic southbound to Portland. The northbound bridge was built in 1917, and the southbound bridge was built in 1958. The Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Project, as described in the record of decision, will replace the I-5 bridges, extend light rail to Vancouver, improve closely spaced interchanges, and enhance the pedestrian and bicycle paths. The estimated project costs range from \$3.1 billion to \$3.5 billion. Between 2005 and 2013, \$196.6 million was spent on the project, with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) spending \$94.1 million and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) spending \$102.5 million. The project was discontinued officially in the spring of 2014.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A bistate megaproject is defined as a highway construction project valued at \$500 million or more that extends across the border between Washington and another state.

The WSDOT is required to notify the House and Senate Transportation Committees when it initiates work with another state to prepare an EIS on a bistate megaproject.

Prior to establishing a bistate megaproject work group, the Legislature must consult with the Pacific Northwest Economic Region to explore and determine the most effective strategies for establishing bistate work groups. This work should include strategies on how to organize work groups, determine work group leadership structure, define work group goals and responsibilities, and select work group participants. Any recommendations must be presented to the Legislature for consideration.

In conjunction with developing the EIS with the other state, the WSDOT must establish a bistate megaproject workgroup in order to assist the WSDOT in the preparation of the EIS and to facilitate communication between the legislative bodies and key stakeholders of the respective states. The workgroup will serve as an advisory body and must, at a minimum, consist of members of the legislatures of both states, representatives of the executive branches of both states, and other appropriate public and private stakeholders. The WSDOT must provide administrative and staff support to the work group as necessary.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill requires that prior to establishing a bistate megaproject work group, the Legislature must consult with the Pacific Northwest Economic Region to explore and determine the most effective strategies for establishing bistate work groups. This work should include strategies on how to organize work groups, determine work group leadership structure, define work group goals and responsibilities, and select work group participants. Any recommendations must be presented to the Legislature for consideration.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This work group is no longer about the CRC Project, but is the outcome of a lot of time thinking about lessons learned and where to go next. This bill is meant to lay out the groundwork so that legislative bodies of both states won't have to come in at the end and bless and fund the project with no say in the project development. The intention is to make sure the project does not take too long and to make sure there is a work group in place from the very beginning of the project.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Wylie, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.