

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 1868

As of March 20, 2015

Title: An act relating to county road fund purposes for certain counties.

Brief Description: Expanding county road fund purposes for certain counties.

Sponsors: Representatives Lytton and Morris.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/04/15, 75-21.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 3/19/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: County Road Funds (CRFs) Generally. Each county maintains a CRF to be used for county road purposes. In general, a county must deposit in the CRF any money:

- generated by the county road district levy, which is authorized at the rate of up to \$2.25 per \$1,000 of assessed property value;
- received from state motor vehicle fuel tax revenues; and
- received as federal reimbursements for expenses paid from the CRF.

Authorized Use of CRFs. A county may generally use its CRF for county road purposes including the construction, repair, or maintenance of county roads, bridges, or ferries or ferry-related wharves.

The CRF statute specifies a number of authorized expenses, including the following:

- insurance, self-insurance, or risk management programs directly related to county road purposes;
- construction, maintenance, or improvement of park and ride lots;
- acquisition, operation, and maintenance of equipment, quarries, or pits for material extraction;
- operation of the county engineering office;
- some activities relating to fish passage barrier removal; and
- bicycle paths and pedestrian rights of way.

Summary of Bill: A county that consists entirely of islands or has tidally influenced islands may use its CRF for marine facilities such as mooring buoys, docks, and aids to navigation.

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.

In these counties, marine uses relating to navigation and moorage are considered county road purposes.

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: Counties would like flexibility to use locally raised revenue to meet the specific needs of their community, which in many areas means marine transportation. This is a local option, so counties would not have to use any CRF money for marine facilities. Docks and other marine facilities can be expensive, and this would be another important tool for local governments.

CON: There are concerns about the current bill, but not about the goal of assisting counties. There are constitutional concerns about using CRF and fuel tax revenue for marine projects, as well as concerns about statutory conflicts with another county funding program. Additional work is needed.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Ken Dahlstedt, Skagit County; Rick Hughes, San Juan County; Laura Merrill, WA State Assn. of Counties.

CON: Jay Weber, County Road Administration Board, Executive Director.

Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying: No one.