

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5187

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 25, 2015

Title: An act relating to voter approval of a high capacity transportation system plan and financing plan.

Brief Description: Concerning voter approval of a high capacity transportation system plan and financing plan.

Sponsors: Senator Benton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/25/15 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators King, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Fain, Vice Chair; Baumgartner, Ericksen, Miloscia, Rivers and Sheldon.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hobbs, Ranking Minority Member; Liias, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cleveland, Habib, Jayapal and Pedersen.

Staff: Hayley Gamble (786-7452)

Background: Except in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties, transit agencies in counties with a population over 175,000 and containing an interstate highway may elect to form a regional policy committee and operate a High Capacity Transportation System (HCTS). An HCTS operates primarily on dedicated right-of-way and provides a higher level of passenger capacity, speed, and frequency than traditional public transportation. This could include bus rapid transit or light rail. Agencies authorized to provide an HCTS must complete certain planning requirements and then may seek voter approval for various taxes to fund an HCTS. A system plan and financing plan must be provided to voters.

King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties have a separate process for creating a joint policy committee, which they have exercised and resulted in the formation of a Regional Transit Authority, Sound Transit.

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.

Summary of Bill: If a proposal for an HCTS is rejected by voters, the proposing transit agency may not spend any more time or resources on further developing the HCTS plan or financing plan until the HCTS proposal is approved.

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: This is a good government bill, under current law there is nothing they says a transit agency should stop development of an HCTS after voters have voted no. If people say no they mean no. Clark County supports this bill and agrees HCTS projects should be supported by voters before they move forward.

CON: This will restrict the abilities of local agencies to adequately plan for growing communities and transit-dependant populations. Transit agencies should not need voter approval to plan for an HCTS. This will tie the hands of local elected officials and safeguards are already in statute.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Benton, prime sponsor; Mike Burgess, Clark County.

CON: Patrick Sweeney, city of Vancouver.