

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 6314

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As Amended by House, March 4, 2016

**Title:** An act relating to county road administration and maintenance.

**Brief Description:** Concerning county road administration and maintenance.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Fain and Mullet).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 1/25/16, 2/08/16 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 2/17/16, 47-0.

Passed House: 3/04/16, 73-24.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6314 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators King, Chair; Fain, Vice Chair, Budget; Hobbs, Ranking Minority Member; Liias, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Cleveland, Ericksen, Jayapal, Litzow, Miloscia, Rivers, Sheldon and Takko.

**Staff:** Hayley Gamble (786-7452)

**Background:** County Road Engineers. A county road engineer (CRE) is the county employee responsible for all work and records relating to county road construction, maintenance, ownership, and planning. The specific duties, location, method of record retention and other requirements of a CRE are prescribed in current law.

Road Vacation. By ordinance, a county may choose to vacate certain county roads and transfer those roads to other entities. A county may require compensation equal to, or a percentage of, the appraised value of the road that is being vacated. In King County, there are multiple segments of county roads that are located wholly within a city or town and not connected to the county road system.

Work by County Employees. In counties with a population of 400,000 or more, county employees may only perform work valued at up to ten percent of the dollar value of the annual public works budget. All remaining work, except emergency work, must be

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contracted out. Additionally, county employees in these counties may not perform a public works project in excess of \$90,000 if more than one trade is involved, or a public works project in excess of \$45,000 if only one trade is involved.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** County Road Engineers (CRE). Language listing specific books and other items to be provided to a CRE is stricken. Language stating books in the CRE's office are public records is replaced with language that would make all records under the authority of the CRE public records. Requirements for CREs to keep certain records in his or her office are stricken and new language requires certain records to be publically available and retained as other records are by the county.

Road Vacation. When determining compensation on a road to be vacated by a county, in addition to current law allowing a county to require compensation equal to, or a percentage of, appraised value, an appraising agency may take into consideration transfer of liability, risk, increased property taxes, cost avoidance, limits on development and future public benefit.

Work by County Employees. In counties with a population of 400,000 or more, definitions of "Riverine project" and "Storm water project" are provided. In these counties, county employees may complete a riverine or stormwater project that is \$250,000 or less, if more than one trade is involved, or is \$125,000 if only one trade is involved.

**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 bill addresses stranded segments of road within King County, known as orphan roads. It is very inefficient for the county to manage these roads. County road engineer statutes are in need of modernizing. Current law is not consistent with modern practices and keeping electronic records. The King County Roads and Bridges Taskforce found that there is not enough revenue to support the needs. The taskforce recommended reducing the amount of infrastructure, and this would be partly achieved in this bill. It also allows leveraging of technology to be more efficient.

OTHER: The Cities of Kent and Shoreline has some concerns with section two of the proposed substitute. The county could transfer roads to cities without agreement between all parties. There are other better processes. County roads often have deficient standards compared to city roads.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Fred Jarrett, Dep Exec, King County; Brenda Bauer, King County DOT; Louise Miller, Citizen; Bryce Yadon, Futurewise.

OTHER: Doug Levy, City of Kent; Scott MacColl, City of Shoreline.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.

**House Amendment(s):** Allows a board of county commissioners, rather than an appraising agency, to consider the following when adjusting the appraised value of a vacated road: the transfer of liability or risk, the increased value to the public in property taxes, the avoided costs for management or maintenance, and any limits on development or future benefit public benefit.