
Transportation Committee

HB 2071

Brief Description: Establishing state route number 167 as a permanent eligible toll facility.

Sponsors: Representatives Clibborn, Muri, McBride, Fey, Rodne, Wylie, Gregerson, Tarleton and Morris.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes the State Route 167 (SR 167) tolling pilot project in King County permanent.
- Designates SR 167 an eligible toll facility.
- Mandates that toll revenue generated in the corridor only be spent to construct, improve, preserve, maintain, manage, or operate the facility, as specified in RCW 47.56.820.
- Removes the restriction on procurement activity that is no longer operative under current law.

Hearing Date: 2/21/17

Staff: Alyssa Ball (786-7140).

Background:

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes are highway lanes reserved part-time or full-time for vehicles carrying a minimum number of occupants. The object of these lanes is to facilitate the operation of transit vehicles and other multi-occupant vehicles, allowing them to avoid congestion and providing those vehicles with improved travel times. There are currently over 200 miles of HOV lanes in operation in the central Puget Sound area. During certain periods, HOV lanes are operating below capacity while adjacent general purpose lanes are congested.

High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes are lanes that are open to carpools, vanpools, transit vehicles, and toll-paying single occupant vehicles. The goal for establishing these lanes is to provide a higher level of service for multi-occupant vehicles, while permitting single occupant vehicles to

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use surplus capacity in the lane by paying a toll. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has authority to designate HOV lanes on state highways. It does not, however, have the authority to designate HOT lanes and impose charges for the use of those lanes. The Legislature must designate a facility as an eligible toll facility prior to the imposition of tolls.

In 2005 the Legislature authorized a HOT lanes pilot project on nine miles of HOV lanes on State Route 167 in King County and the HOT lanes opened in 2008. Since then, the facility has been expanded to include 14 miles of HOT lanes from Renton to Pacific. The facility has variable toll rates dependent on time of day, level of congestion, vehicle occupancy, or other criteria. During peak hours, the tolls must be adjusted to maintain HOT lane performance of at least 45 miles per hour for at least 90 percent of the time. In 2016 the HOT lanes generated \$1.4 million in revenue and had \$834,000 in operating expenses. The average toll for the facility was \$2.16.

Summary of Bill:

State Route 167 is designated as an eligible toll facility. Toll revenue may only be spent to construct, improve, preserve, maintain, manage, or operate the facility. The designation of the facility as a pilot project is removed. The restrictions on procurement activity are removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2017.