
Transportation Committee

SB 5649

Brief Description: Modifying the eligibility requirements for certain counties to form a regional transportation planning organization.

Sponsors: Senators Hawkins and Saldaña.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows a county with a population greater than 40,000 and a size greater than 5,000 square miles to form a regional transportation planning organization.

Hearing Date: 3/9/17

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

A regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) is a voluntary association of local governments within a county, or within geographically contiguous counties, created primarily to prepare regional transportation plans, to ensure local and regional coordination of transportation planning, and to maintain a six-year regional transportation improvement program.

An RTPO can cover both urban and rural areas and receives state funding in support of its planning efforts. Federal legislation has created the metropolitan planning organization (MPO). An MPO covers an urbanized area and receives federal funding in support of its planning efforts. In urbanized areas, the RTPO under state law is the same as the MPO designated for federal transportation planning purposes.

An RTPO must contain at least one county; have a population of at least 100,000, have a population of at least 75,000 and contain a Washington State Ferries terminal, or contain at least three counties; and have as members all counties in the region and contain at least 60 percent of the cities and towns in the region representing at least 75 percent of the cities' and towns' populations.

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.

There are 15 RTPOs covering 37 of the 39 counties in Washington. Okanogan and San Juan counties are not part of any RTPO.

Summary of Bill:

A county with a population greater than 40,000 and a size greater than 5,000 square miles is allowed to form an RTPO, so long as it meets the other requirements for RTPO formation.

Based on the 2016 Office of Financial Management population estimates, Okanogan County is the only county that currently meets the population and square mileage thresholds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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