

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1397

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, March 26, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to encouraging the use of electric or hybrid-electric aircraft for regional air travel.

**Brief Description:** Encouraging the use of electric or hybrid-electric aircraft for regional air travel.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Slatter, Dent, Fey, Orcutt, Kloba, Valdez, Wylie, Pollet, Fitzgibbon, Tharinger, Morris, Eslick, Doglio and Ortiz-Self.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/05/19, 88-10.

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 3/18/19, 3/26/19 [DPA, w/oRec].

### Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Directs the Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT) to convene a work group to study the electric aircraft industry and assess infrastructure needs related to electric aircraft for commercial air travel in Washington.
- Revises the DOT's general supervision of aeronautics to include aeronautics involving electrically powered aircraft.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hobbs, Chair; Saldaña, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Das, Lovelett, Nguyen, O'Ban, Randall, Takko, Wilson, C. and Zeiger.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Padden.

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

**Background:** Washington State Department of Transportation Aviation. DOT has general supervision over aeronautics within Washington. DOT is directed to encourage, foster, and

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assist in the development of aeronautics in Washington and to encourage the establishment of airports and air navigation facilities. Air navigation facilities are used to provide aid in air navigation and include any structures, mechanisms, lights, beacons, markers, communicating systems, or other instruments or devices used as an aid to safe taking-off, navigation, and landing of an aircraft or of the safe operation and maintenance of an airport. DOT is also directed to cooperate with and assist the federal government, municipalities of Washington, and other bodies in developing aeronautics.

The current Washington Aviation System Plan (Plan) includes discussion on emerging trends and issues in aircraft innovation that DOT anticipates will become relevant during the next 20 years. According to the Plan, electrically powered aircraft is one such innovation that is likely to become more widespread. Electric aircraft are allowable under Federal Aviation Administration rules, and currently most are used primarily for experiments and demonstrations.

Electric Aircraft Work Group. In the 2018 Legislative Session, the 2018 Supplemental Transportation Budget included direction to DOT to convene an electric aircraft work group. The work group was tasked with analyzing the state of the electrically powered aircraft industry and assessing infrastructure needs related to the deployment of electric or hybrid-electric aircraft for commercial air travel in Washington. The work group must report its findings and recommendations to the transportation committees of the Legislature by June 30, 2019. The authority for this work group expires at the end of the 2017-19 biennium, which is June 30, 2019.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** Washington State Department of Transportation Aviation. DOT is given direction to develop and sustain aeronautics involving electrically powered aircraft that may include hydrogen fuel cells as part of DOT's general supervision over aeronautics.

Electric Aircraft Work Group. DOT is directed to convene a work group to study the state of the electrically powered aircraft industry and assess infrastructure needs related to the deployment of electric or hybrid-electric aircraft that may include hydrogen fuel cells for commercial air travel in Washington. The work group must be comprised of representatives from several industries related to electric or hybrid-electric aircraft, and the chair of the work group may be a consultant specializing in aeronautics.

The study must include recommendations to further the advancement of the electrification of aircraft for regional commercial use within Washington, including specific, measurable goals for the years 2030, 2040, and 2050. The work group must submit a report and recommendations to the transportation committees of the Legislature by November 15, 2020. By February 15, 2021, and every two years thereafter, DOT must provide a report on any efforts to implement the recommendations to the transportation committees of the Legislature.

#### **EFFECT OF TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):**

- Generally added language relating to hydrogen fuel cells. Added language indicating electric aircraft which may use hydrogen fuel cells are part of the electric aircraft

work group and related work products. Adds a representative of the hydrogen fuel cell industry to the electric aircraft work group. The department's general supervision over aeronautics is modified to include aeronautics involving electrically powered aircraft, which may include hydrogen fuel cells.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on House Bill:** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Electric airplanes and hybrid electric airplanes are important. Batteries can make airplanes fly, for almost half the cost of a traditional regional airplane. Electric aircraft regional travel could help with congestion. The workgroup would include many experts. Norway is already leading in the push towards electric aircraft travel. This study would provide a robust look at deeper available data.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Vandana Slatter, Prime Sponsor; Robert Hodgman, Senior Aviation Planner, WSDOT.

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