
**Innovation, Community & Economic
Development, & Veterans Committee**

SSB 5229

Brief Description: Accelerating rural job growth and promoting economic recovery across Washington through site readiness grants.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Frame, Warnick, Kuderer, Lovelett, Nobles, Randall, Salomon, Shewmake and Torres).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) to provide planning program grants to qualifying projects for the costs of achieving site readiness.
- Increases the maximum award limit on the CERB planning program grants.
- Requires the CERB's biennial outcome-based evaluations to include certain information relating to projects' use of businesses certified by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and businesses that self-report meeting certification requirements.

Hearing Date: 3/10/23

Staff: Cassie Jones (786-7303).

Background:

Community Economic Revitalization Board.

The Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) provides financial assistance to local

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governments and federally recognized tribes for public infrastructure that encourages new business development and economic growth. The Department of Commerce provides administrative support for the CERB.

The CERB is authorized to make direct loans and grants to political subdivisions of the state and to federally recognized tribes to finance public facility projects. Grants are available for eligible planning and construction projects.

Community Economic Revitalization Board Planning Program Grants.

The CERB provides grant funding for studies to evaluate economic development projects. When considering planning grants, the CERB gives priority to projects that could result in a type of project eligible for CERB construction funds. Eligible uses include site-specific plans, studies, and analyses that address environmental impacts, capital facilities, land use, permitting, feasibility, marketing, project engineering, design, and site planning.

The CERB offers grants for planning projects up to 80 percent of the total project cost. The project applicant must match the CERB's funding with at least 20 percent of the total project cost. The maximum award limit for planning grants is \$50,000.

Biennial Outcome-Based Evaluations.

The CERB is required to conduct biennial outcome-based evaluations of the financial assistance provided. The evaluations must include a number of elements specific to projects funded by the CERB, including the number and types of businesses assisted by the funded projects. The biennial evaluations must be submitted to the Governor and the Legislature by December 31 of every even-numbered year.

Summary of Bill:

The CERB may award planning program grants to projects for the costs of achieving site readiness. The maximum award limit on planning grants is increased. Until December 31, 2028, there is no maximum award limit. Beginning January 1, 2029, grants may not exceed \$200,000. The CERB must be define "achieving site readiness."

The CERB must include in its biennial outcome-based evaluation the total number, percentage, and dollar amount of projects' use of businesses certified by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises and the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as businesses not certified by these organizations but which self-report as meeting the requirements of certification.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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