

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2191

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 26, 2024

Title: An act relating to adding two voting members that are transit users to the governing body of public transportation benefit areas.

Brief Description: Adding two voting members that are transit users to the governing body of public transportation benefit areas.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Timmons, Duerr, Reed, Ramel and Reeves).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/8/24, 57-40.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/20/24, 2/26/24 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows public transportation benefit areas (PTBAs) to add two voting positions for transit users to their governing boards.
- Requires that of the new positions appointed, one must use transit as their primary transportation mode, and one must represent an organization primarily serving transit users.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Lias, Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; Shewmake, Vice Chair; Cleveland, Hansen, Kauffman, Lovelett, Nobles, Valdez and Wilson, C..

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Fortunato and MacEwen.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Signed by Senators King, Ranking Member; Holy, Assistant Ranking Member; Hawkins, Padden and Wilson, J..

Staff: Jenna Forty (786-7755)

Background: Public transportation benefit areas (PTBAs) are a type of municipal corporation structure to provide transit service within a county or a multicounty area. PTBAs are authorized to build and operate transit systems within the specified jurisdiction area, and most commonly operate fixed route services with complementary demand response and vanpool services. The boards of PTBAs are comprised of not more than nine elected officials representing cities and counties within the area, and not more than 15 for governing bodies of multicounty areas. PTBAs are also required to have nonvoting members of their governing bodies that must be recommended by labor organizations. The composition of PTBAs governing bodies is reviewed every four years. Among the transit agencies in the state, PTBAs are the most common form of governance, comprising 21 of the 32 transit agencies statewide.

Summary of Bill: Governing bodies of PTBAs are authorized to increase board size to 11, or 17 for multicounty areas, if they elect to add two voting positions for transit users. Of the two positions, one must primarily rely on public transportation as their transportation mode, and the second must represent an organization that primarily serves individuals that are transit dependent. In the event that an organization that primarily serves transit dependent individuals does not exist within the PTBA jurisdiction, a second member relying primarily on public transportation systems may be appointed. Governing bodies are required to conduct meetings at times and places reasonably accessible by transit. Transit-using members appointed to governing boards must be provided comprehensive training regarding the Open Public Meetings Act and the Public Records Act, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The ability to appoint new transit-using members to the governing body does not apply to any PTBA that already had citizen positions as part of their governing body prior to the enactment of the Interlocal Cooperation Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2025.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is an opportunity for the boards to hear directly from users. Boards already do a great job through advisory committees, but this bill will create consistency across the state.

This legislation requires that transits are responsive to their riders and customers. Transit funding is under attack and transit reliant people are dedicated to transit success. Adding these board members would not hinder governance and would only add benefit.

Clallam transit would like to add transit riders to the board, but not currently allowed by statute.

OTHER: Whatcom Transit already has a variety of methods to integrate rider feedback.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Joe Timmons, Prime Sponsor; Joe Kunzler; Anna Zivarts, Disability Mobility Initiative, Disability Rights WA; Amin Tony Hester, CFI; Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin, Councilmember, City of Port Angeles; Tracy Turner, Self Advocates In Leadership.

OTHER: Maureen McCarthy, Whatcom Transportation Authority.

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