

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2211

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, April 21, 2009

Title: An act relating to the authorization, administration, collection, and enforcement of tolls on the state route number 520 corridor.

Brief Description: Addressing the authorization, administration, collection, and enforcement of tolls on the state route number 520 corridor.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Clibborn, Eddy, Maxwell and Liias).

Brief History: Passed House: 4/17/09, 52-46.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 4/20/09, 4/21/09 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Marr, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Berkey, Delvin, Jarrett, Kastama, Kilmer, King and Ranker.

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: The State Route (SR) 520 Evergreen Point Bridge is a 1.5 mile, 43-year-old bridge crossing Lake Washington in King County. The bridge is scheduled for replacement due to its vulnerability to seismic activity and storm events. Legislation enacted during the 2008 Legislative Session requires the project design to have six total lanes, with four general purpose lanes and two lanes that are for high occupancy vehicle travel and transit. The bridge must also be designed to accommodate effective connections for transit, including high capacity transit, to the light rail station at the University of Washington.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): Effective August 1, 2009, tolls are authorized on the SR 520 corridor. The corridor is defined as that portion of SR 520 between the junctions of I-5 and SR 202. The toll imposed must only be charged on the floating bridge portion of the SR 520 corridor.

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.

The tolling authority (the Washington Transportation Commission) must set a variable toll schedule for the SR 520 corridor to maintain travel time, speed, and reliability on the corridor. Additionally, the toll rates must initially generate revenue sufficient to provide for (1) the issuance of certain bonds in the amount necessary to fund only the replacement of the floating bridge segment of SR 520, and (2) certain costs associated with the project.

The SR 520 Work Group is created, consisting of the chairs of the transportation committees of the Legislature, the legislators from the 43rd and 48th legislative districts, two legislators from the 46th legislative district, two legislators from the 45th legislative district, and the Secretary of Transportation.

The Work Group must consider design options on both the east side and the west side of the corridor. The Work Group must work with the Washington State Department of Transportation to review and evaluate the respective design options and must solicit input on design options from impacted neighborhoods and community groups. The Work Group must review a financing strategy to fund the projects in the SR 520 corridor, which must be based on a total cost of all the intended projects in the corridor not to exceed \$4.65 billion. The SR 520 Work Group must present a final report to the Legislature by January 1, 2010, that includes recommendations on financing and design options.

The SR 520 Corridor Account is created in the State Treasury. Deposits into the account include SR 520 bond proceeds and SR 520 toll revenue.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments As Passed Committee): The following changes are made: (1) expires the language limiting initial toll-backed bond proceeds to just the floating bridge on July 1, 2010; (2) adjusts the composition of the SR 520 Work Group; and (3) removes the requirement that the SR 520 Work Group review project designs on the east side of the corridor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on August 1, 2009.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Amendments As Heard in Committee:
PRO: This bill is necessary to start generating sufficient revenue to start work on the center portion (floating bridge) of the SR 520 corridor. The floating bridge is currently vulnerable to significant weather and seismic activity. The SR 520 corridor is a very important transportation corridor. The bill will help facilitate maintaining traffic flow through the corridor. It does not stop existing design and construction work on the east side of the corridor. The bill caps the project costs at \$4.65 billion, allows the replacement bridge to open in 2014 and the final corridor projects to be completed in 2016, and allows for receipt of the federal urban partnership grants.

OTHER: It is important that the bill not slow down existing design and construction work on the east side of the corridor. A member of the Transportation Commission should be added to the Work Group. Considering new designs for the east side may increase project costs. This bill will have fiscal impacts to the courts as they administer tolling infractions generated in the corridor.

Persons Testifying: PRO: David Dye, Washington State Department of Transportation; Mike Groesch, Washington Roundtable; Mike Doubleday, city of Bellevue; Doug Levy, city of Redmond; Reema Griffith, Washington Transportation Commission; Ron Judd, Governor's Office.

OTHER: Mellani McAleenan, Board for Judicial Administration; Dave Overstreet, AAA of Washington.