

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5493

As of February 11, 2009

Title: An act relating to creating a regional transportation corridor authority.

Brief Description: Creating a regional transportation corridor authority.

Sponsors: Senators Murray, Jarrett and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/10/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: The final recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation submitted December 1, 2000, included Recommendation #6: "Provide regions with the ability to plan, select, fund, and implement (or contract for implementation of) projects identified to meet the region's transportation and land use goals." Additionally, in its final report issued on December 31, 2006, the Regional Transportation Commission included a primary recommendation stating that a single entity should be established in the central Puget Sound region "which has authority and responsibility for planning, prioritizing, and funding all modes of regional transportation...."

Under current law, tolls on state transportation facilities must first be authorized by the Legislature, with toll rates set by the state Transportation Commission. However, some local and regional governments have limited tolling authority. For example, under certain circumstances, cities, port districts, transportation benefit districts, and regional transportation investment districts may authorize tolls within their respective jurisdictions.

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

Summary of Bill (Proposed First Substitute): A six-member regional transportation corridor authority (RTCA) may be established to plan, finance, and manage the SR 520 and I-90 corridor. The purpose of the RTCA is to provide for a comprehensive and integrated corridor-based multimodal regional transportation system within a defined transportation corridor. The RTCA has authority to submit a system management and financing proposal to applicable voters. The RTCA, in order to implement the plan, may impose tolls and demand

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.

management charges within the corridor. The RTCA also has bonding authority. The RTCA has final authority over state transportation improvements within the corridor.

The RTCA governing board includes the following members: (1) the Secretary of the Department of Transportation; (2) the member of the state Transportation Commission representing the corridor area; (3) the Mayor of Seattle; (4) an appointee representing the eastside of Lake Washington; (5) the King County executive; and (6) the Executive Director of the Puget Sound Regional Council. However, the RTCA governing board must periodically review the composition of the board and submit recommendations to the Legislature regarding changes to the governance structure as deemed appropriate by the board.

The RTCA may annex contiguous area within King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, which then must be governed by an adjusted governing board representing the appropriate jurisdictions in the corridor. However, no more than one RTCA may exist in the three-county area at any given time.

The Joint Transportation Committee is provided funding to conduct a feasibility study regarding providing this authority to other regions in the state.

Appropriation: \$250,000 is appropriated from the motor vehicle account to the Joint Transportation Committee for the purpose of the study required in section 6.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The central Puget Sound region needs a robust tolling system, including variable tolling, and this bill would provide a mechanism to manage the SR520 and I-90 transportation corridor.

OTHER: It is concerning that numerous transportation funding mechanisms exist, and continue to be created, within the region, because they often do not coordinate well.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Murray, prime sponsor; Bill LaBorde, Transportation Choices; Morgan Ahouse, Sierra Club.

OTHER: Dick Ford, Washington Transportation Commission.