

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2482

As Passed House:
February 9, 2012

Title: An act relating to designating innovation partnership zones.

Brief Description: Designating innovation partnership zones.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Finn, Ryu, Hasegawa and Stanford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community & Economic Development & Housing: 1/19/12, 1/30/12 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/9/12, 81-16.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires Innovation Partnership Zones (IPZs) to be part of an industry cluster.
- Provides information and options to applicants that do not meet all the criteria for IPZ designation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Finn, Vice Chair; Ahern, Maxwell, Ryu, Santos and Walsh.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Smith, Ranking Minority Member; Orcutt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Jennifer Thornton (786-7147).

Background:

In 2007 the Legislature directed the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (now the Department of Commerce) to design and implement an Innovation

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Partnership Zone (IPZ) program through which the state would encourage and support research institutions, workforce training organizations, and globally competitive companies working cooperatively in close geographic proximity to create commercially viable products and jobs.

Using specified criteria, the Department of Commerce (Department) with the advice of the Washington Economic Development Commission (Commission) designates the IPZs for a period of four years. The IPZs are administered by an economic development council, port, workforce development council, city, or county. An IPZ may renew its designation through a reapplication process, and may lose its designation for failure to meet performance standards. The IPZs are eligible for funds as provided by the Legislature or at the discretion of the Governor. There are currently 14 IPZs in Washington.

Summary of Bill:

The IPZs must be part of an industry cluster, which is defined as a geographic concentration of interconnected companies in a single industry; related businesses in other industries, including suppliers and customers; and associated institutions, including government and education.

A firm's global competitiveness can be signified by evidence of sales in international markets instead of through other recognized evidence of international success.

When designating IPZs, the Department must use criteria it develops in consultation with the Commission, rather than other criteria recommended by the Commission.

An IPZ may be eligible for Local Improvement District (LID) funds if it meets all of the other requirements to obtain the LID funding.

For applicants that do not receive an IPZ designation, the Department is required to:

- identify deficiencies in the proposal and recommend steps to strengthen the proposal;
- provide the applicant with the opportunity to appeal the decision to the Director of the Department; and
- allow the applicant to reapply for IPZ designation during the following calendar year or any subsequent application cycle.

The required IPZ performance measures must be provided to the Department on an annual basis.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) We have seen a lot of the IPZs in action, and the Community and Economic Development and Housing Committee had the opportunity to tour and hear from IPZ partners in Grays Harbor in October. The IPZs are not a single program, but a framework that brings regional innovation together. It starts at the local level. The IPZs have a public-private partnership that leads to the creation of jobs, brings in new industries, and keeps current industries. This bill addresses some things that have arisen with the program. Some applications are very good, but have minor things that need to be corrected. Technical assistance can help them strengthen out their application without having to wait two years to reapply. This is especially important if there are some industry opportunities waiting for them.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kenney, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.