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**HOUSE BILL 2646**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Wylie, Stonier, Tharinger, Clibborn, McBride, Harris, Macri, Cody, Tarleton, Appleton, Ortiz-Self, and Slatter

AN ACT Relating to facilitating transportation projects of statewide significance; adding new sections to chapter 47.05 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that Washington's transportation needs are increasing as both a surge in trade and population create demand on the system. Large transportation projects that provide improvements in accessibility, freight mobility, and safety, as well as maximize economic development, are critical to Washington's future. It is the intent of the legislature to recognize transportation projects of statewide significance, and to expedite their completion through the establishment of a formal process of coordination.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 47.05 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A transportation project of statewide significance means a project that will:

(a) Improve accessibility for a significant number of Washington residents;

(b) Improve the reliability of commute times for residents of the area;

(c) Improve the movement of freight through the corridor;

(d) Provide safety improvements and contribute to a reduction in injuries and fatalities;

(e) Maximize opportunities for economic development in the region;

(f) Make improvement to transit, pedestrian, and bike access; and

(g) Serve as a critical route for both national and state defense.

(2) A transportation project of statewide significance must be valued in excess of one billion dollars.

(3) A transportation project of statewide significance must provide the direct employment of one thousand five hundred persons over the life of the project.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 47.05 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department shall:

(a) Develop an application for designation of transportation projects as transportation projects of statewide significance. The application must be accompanied by a letter of approval from the legislative authority of any jurisdiction that will have the proposed transportation project of statewide significance within its boundaries. No designation of a project as a transportation project of statewide significance shall be made without the letter of approval, except as provided in subsection (2) of this section. The letter of approval must state that the jurisdiction joins in the request for the designation of the transportation project as one of statewide significance and has or will hire the professional staff that will be required to expedite the processes necessary to the completion of a transportation project of statewide significance. The transportation project proponents may provide the funding necessary for the jurisdiction to hire the professional staff that will be required to so expedite. The application must contain information regarding the location of the project, how the project meets the criteria specified in section 2 of this act, and other information required by the department; and

(b) Designate a transportation project as a transportation project of statewide significance if the department determines, after review of the application under criteria adopted by rule, the transportation project will meet the criteria listed in section 2(1) of this act.

(2) Any project designated by the legislature and codified in this chapter is not subject to the application requirements set out in subsection (1) of this section. However, the project is subject to the coordination process in subsection (3) of this section.

(3) The department shall assign a project facilitator or coordinator to each transportation project of statewide significance to:

(a) Assemble a team of state and local government and private officials to help meet the planning, permitting, and development needs of each project. The team must include those responsible for planning, permitting, and licensing, infrastructure development, workforce development services, including higher education, transportation services, and the provision of utilities; and

(b) Work with each team member to expedite their actions in furtherance of the project and coordinate any cross border communications, if applicable.

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