

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1968

As Passed House:

March 13, 1995

Title: An act relating to regional transportation planning organizations.

Brief Description: Adjusting requirements for regional transportation planning organizations.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives McMorris, Mastin, Koster, Chandler, Sheahan and R. Fisher).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 3/1/95, 3/6/95 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/13/95, 93-2.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Benton, Vice Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Skinner, Vice Chairman; R. Fisher, Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Blanton; Brown; Buck; Cairnes; Chandler; Chopp; Elliot; Hankins; Horn; Johnson; Koster; McMahan; Ogden; Quall; Robertson; Romero; D. Schmidt; Scott and Tokuda.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Hatfield, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Gene Baxstrom (786-7303).

Background: Regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) are created through the voluntary association of local governments. Policy advice to an RTPO is provided by a policy board made up of representatives of major employers in the region, Department of Transportation (DOT), transit districts, port districts, and member cities and counties.

An RTPO must include, at minimum, at least one county; have at least 100,000 in population or include three counties; and have as members all counties within the

region and 60 percent of the cities within the region representing at least 75 percent of the city population.

The objective of RTPOs is to enhance transportation planning and coordination both within a county and within regions. Specifically, RTPO duties are to: (a) prepare a transportation strategy of the region; (b) develop and maintain a regional transportation plan identifying regionally significant transportation facilities; (c) certify that the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans are consistent with the regional plans; and (d) develop a six-year regional transportation improvement program prioritizing and identifying funds for addressing the regionally significant city, county and transit agency projects.

Currently, there are 14 RTPOs, which include 38 of the state's 39 counties. State financial and technical support are provided to assist with the effort of developing regional transportation plans.

Summary of Bill: The size requirements for regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) are reduced to require that the RTPO have a population of at least 50,000 instead of 100,000 or contain at least two counties instead of three. An exception to these requirements is made in the case of a county consisting entirely of islands and having a population of less than 50,000.

This bill is null and void if not funded in the transportation budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the transportation budget.

Testimony For: This bill allows local governments increased flexibility in arranging RTPOs which more closely reflect their regional needs.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Cathy McMorris, prime sponsor; Ken Rosenberg, Northeast Tri-Counties RTPO; Curt Eschels, Washington State Association of Counties; Carl Hemenway, Lewis County Commissioner; and Deirdra Sessler, Lewis County.