

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1968

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, April 3, 1995

Title: An act relating to regional transportation planning organizations.

Brief Description: Adjusting requirements for regional transportation planning organizations.

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/23/95, 4/3/95 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Owen, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; Morton, Oke, Prince, Rasmussen, Schow, Sellar and Wood.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Haugen, Kohl and Prentice.

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 minimum size 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 specific funding for this bill is not provided for in the 1995 transportation appropriations act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

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

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative McMorris, original prime sponsor (pro); K.O. Rosenberg, NE Tri-Counties (pro).