

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESSB 6753

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C 280 L 96

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Improving the Tacoma Narrows bridge.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Oke, Prince, Prentice, Sheldon, Swecker, Wojahn, Deccio, Schow, A. Anderson, Sellar, Winsley, Strannigan, Finkbeiner, Moyer, McDonald, Haugen, Wood and Rasmussen).

**Senate Committee on Transportation**

**House Committee on Transportation**

**Background:** The Public-Private Initiatives in Transportation (PPI) program was established in 1993 to test the feasibility of privately financed transportation improvements in Washington State. The legislation provides a wide range of opportunities for private entities to undertake all or a portion of the study, planning design, finance, construction, operation and maintenance of transportation facilities that will become state owned.

Changes in the program by the 1995 Legislature require an advisory vote on projects selected by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) that receive public opposition following selection, and prohibit the WSDOT from entering into agreements with private sector developers of projects with opposition prior to the advisory vote taking place. Three projects received the requisite number of signatures in opposition (SR 16/Tacoma Narrows, SRs 520 and 522 corridor improvements) and are subject to the advisory vote requirement.

Concern has been expressed that current law requiring that the advisory vote be on the imposition of tolls on a conceptual project will delay project construction and prevent a meaningful vote.

Proponents of changes in the PPI program favor an advisory vote on a preferred alternative that would be identified through the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required under the state and federal environmental review process.

**Summary:** The requirements apply to all PPI projects selected to date and are not limited to the SR 16 corridor/Tacoma Narrows bridge improvement project.

For a PPI project that requires a vote, the vote must be on the preferred alternative identified through the environmental review process required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and, if applicable, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The execution of the advisory vote process by the WSDOT is subject to prior legislative appropriation of funds to conduct environmental impact studies, a public involvement program, local involvement committee activities, traffic and economic impact analysis, engineering and technical studies, and the advisory vote.

WSDOT is authorized to enter into a contract with a developer of a PPI project to conduct the work necessary to identify the preferred alternative, but is prohibited from entering into a franchise agreement with a developer prior to the advisory vote.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	43	0	
House	92	2	(House amended)
Senate	42	1	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** March 29, 1996