

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2261

As of February 20, 1998

Title: An act relating to reducing paperwork related to requirements for the governor's budget document.

Brief Description: Reducing paperwork for the governor's budget document.

Sponsors: Representatives Huff, H. Sommers and Wensman; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History: Ways & Means: 2/19/98.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Background: The state Budget and Accounting Act (Chapter 43.88 RCW) sets forth the requirements for the state's budget, accounting, and fiscal reporting systems. The law specifies the contents of the Governor's capital and operating budget proposals and timelines for preparation and submission of the documents to the Legislature. Among other information, the Governor's budget document is required to contain revenue data by fund, workload information, debt service, capital project plans, and proposed agency expenditures classified by fund, function, and "objects of expenditure." "Objects" are defined under state accounting rules as categories of expenditures, such as wages, benefits, equipment, travel, and goods and services. This information is also available in state accounting reports.

Summary of Bill: The requirement that the Governor's biennial budget document include prospective object of expenditure information is deleted. A new requirement that the budget data be tabulated for each agency reflects current practice at the Office of Financial Management.

There is a technical change to correct a reference to the Puget Sound management plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Details of expenditure objects have already been deleted from the Governor's transportation budget submittal, and this bill would provide consistency with the state operating budget. Expenditure object information is available in legislative fiscal notes, agency decision packages, state accounting records, and the state allotment process. As the Governor's budget document is enhanced by new information on performance measurements, the deletion of object detail will reduce paperwork and printing.

Testimony Against: Detailed expenditure information is very useful to citizens and small businesses seeking to keep informed on budget issues and state agency spending. This information needs to be readily accessible to the public in a usable format.

Testified: Maureen Morris, Office of Financial Management (pro); Gary Smith, Independent Business Association (con).