

***Transportation Committee***

***HB 1674***

***Brief Description:*** Authorizing congestion relief districts.

***Sponsors:*** Representatives Fisher, Mitchell and Poulsen; by request of The Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation.

***Brief Summary of Bill***

- *Counties with a population of 40,000 or more are authorized to create congestion relief districts within boundaries approved by the county.*
- *Congestion relief districts are authorized to propose ballot measures establishing user fees on specified roadways within the district.*

***Hearing Date:*** 2/14/01

***Staff:*** Paul Neal (786-7315).

***Background:***

*The Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation (BRCT) presented several recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor designed to improve transportation in Washington. Recommendation 5 of the BRCT is entitled: Invest in maintenance, preservation, and improvement of the entire transportation system so that the transportation benchmarks can be achieved. Recommendation 5 (b)(iv) states: Congestion pricing should be made a policy option for congested urban areas.–*

*Under congestion pricing a driver is charged for their use of a particular roadway. That price can vary at different times depending upon the relative congestion. According to the BRCT, this user-fee mechanism could address two issues at once: 1) generating revenue; and 2) influencing travel behavior. One potential mechanism identified by the BRCT for implementing congestion pricing is the creation of congestion relief districts with authority to impose road user fees within that district.*

**Summary of Bill:**

*Authorizes a county or counties with a population greater than 40,000 to create congestion relief districts. In order to create a district, the legislative authority of the county or counties must convene a congestion relief conference. After holding public hearings, the conference may form a congestion relief district. The county legislative authority may veto the conference's action.*

*The governing body of the relief district is made up of local elected officials and is known as the congestion relief district authority. The authority must develop a comprehensive congestion relief plan identifying a benchmark level of congestion, the amount of local funds that must be combined with state and federal funds in order to meet that benchmark, and the mechanisms for obtaining local funding, focusing on user fees.*

*The congestion relief authority may propose local ballot measures establishing user fees for roadways within the congestion relief district.*

**Appropriation:** *None.*

**Fiscal Note:** *Available.*

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