

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6148

As of March 15, 2001

Title: An act relating to the Puget Sound transportation commission.

Brief Description: Creating the Puget Sound transportation commission.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Thibaudeau, Horn, Finkbeiner, Eide, Constantine, Patterson, McDonald, Prentice and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/15/01.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Jennifer Strus (786-7484)

Background: The Governor and the Legislature created the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation (BRCT) in 1998 to do the following: assess the local, regional and state transportation systems; ensure that current and future money is spent wisely; make the system more accountable and predictable; and prepare a 20 year plan for funding and investing in the transportation system. In its final report, the BRCT issued 18 recommendations. Recommendation 6 states that regions be provided with the ability to plan, select, fund, and implement (or contract for the implementation of) projects identified to meet the region's transportation and land use goals.

Summary of Bill: The Puget Sound Transportation Commission (PSTC) is created and composed of nine members appointed by the Governor. All but two members (the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Office of Financial Management) must be confirmed by the Senate. The Governor establishes urban congestion districts the boundary lines of which must be those of a school district, legislative district, county or any combination of the three.

The PSTC must create a corridor advisory board for each urban congestion district designated by the Governor. The board must provide policy advice to the PSTC in selecting the project or projects to be funded and in choosing which revenue options to put on the ballot. The board must allow representatives of major employers within the district, WSDOT, transit districts, port districts, and affected cities, towns and counties to participate in policy making.

The PSTC must select projects with the assistance of the corridor advisory board. The projects that may be selected are those that constitute improvements to streets, highways, roads, ferries, transit or high capacity transportation (rail). In choosing the projects, the PSTC must use certain benchmarks as a guide. Once the project(s) is selected, the PSTC must develop a funding package which must be submitted to the voters. The referendum must tie the tax increases to specific projects.

The PSTC may impose, within an urban congestion district, and upon approval by a vote of the persons residing within the district, the following revenue options: an excise tax of up to \$2 per employee on all employees within the district; a local option vehicle license fee of up to \$75 per vehicle; tolls on road improvements; a local option gas tax of up to 6 cents per gallon; and a local option commercial vehicle charge of up to \$150 per vehicle.

Once the projects are selected and the voters approve the funding, WSDOT is responsible for the construction of the improvements.

The PSTC matching account is created. The funds raised in the district are deposited into this fund. The funds in the account are eligible to receive a 35 percent match from state funds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 14, 2001.

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