

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6548

As Passed Senate, February 14, 2002

Title: An act relating to signs on bus shelters.

Brief Description: Allowing advertising on bus shelters.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Kastama, Oke, Rasmussen and Gardner).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/29/02, 2/11/02 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/14/02, 44-1.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6548 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Benton, Eide, Finkbeiner, Horn, Jacobsen, Johnson, Kastama, Keiser, McAuliffe, McDonald, Oke, Prentice, T. Sheldon, Shin and Swecker.

Staff: Tami Neilson (786-7452)

Background: Commercial advertising on bus shelters owned and maintained by local transit authorities is not currently allowed on state rights of way. Public transit authorities can generate revenue by selling space on bus shelters to companies that wish to advertise. The Department of Transportation is authorized to rent or lease land, improvements, or air space above or below any lands it does not need but that are held for highway purposes.

Summary of Bill: Unless there are significant safety concerns regarding the placement of certain advertisements, the Department of Transportation leases state rights of way air space to local transit authorities. The local transit authorities are only charged by the department for the air space. The uniform state standard, which regulates signs on state rights of way, must allow local transit authorities to display and maintain commercial advertisements on their bus shelters. The advertisements cannot exceed 24 square feet on each side of the bus shelter panel.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This is a creative way to generate revenue to pay for transit bus shelters, and it is a cost-effective strategy that has been used in many other communities. Advertisements would only be applied to bus shelters in rural and suburban areas.

Testimony Against: With Concerns: A situation may occur where advertising is allowed on state rights of way but not on private property under the Scenic Vistas Act and Federal Highway Beautification Act. Language saying the Department of Transportation "may" lease state right of way air space is preferable to "shall" for safety reasons and because of future projects which may be limited by the existence of the shelters. The whole bus shelter structure should be subject to the lease.

Testified: Senator Kastama, prime sponsor; Scott Morris, Pierce Transit; Peter Thein, Dan Snow, Washington State Transit Association, Mike Dornfeld, Department of Transportation.