

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5502

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As of February 14, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to requiring the tolling agreement for the Columbia river crossing project to contain certain provisions.

**Brief Description:** Requiring Columbia river crossing project tolling agreements to contain certain provisions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Benton, Rivers, Hobbs, Billig and Keiser.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/14/13.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Kim Johnson (786-7472)

**Background:** Under current law, the Legislature is the only entity with the authority to authorize tolls on an eligible toll facility. In 2012, the Legislature designated the Columbia River Crossing Project (CRC) as an eligible toll facility and authorized tolls to be charged for travel on the existing and replacement Interstate 5 Columbia River Bridge, subject to some specified contingencies. One of the contingencies was that the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC), as the state tolling authority, must first enter into an agreement with the Oregon State Transportation Commission regarding the mutual or joint setting, adjustment, and review of toll rates. However, any agreement between the tolling authority and the Oregon State Transportation Commission is not binding or enforceable until 30 days after the next ensuing regular legislative session.

The WSTC and the Oregon State Transportation Commission reached an agreement on December 19, 2012. The agreement will not become binding or enforceable until 30 days after the end of this legislative session.

**Summary of Bill:** Any agreement between the WSTC and the Oregon State Transportation Commission on the joint setting and adjustment of toll rates for the CRC must contain the following provisions:

- a provision ensuring tolls will be set at a rate that will financially impact both Washington and Oregon residents equitably;

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- a provision that the only type of vehicle that will be exempt from paying the toll is an emergency response vehicle;
- a provision creating a bistate citizen tolling advisory committee; and
- a provision clearly setting up a tie breaker type process in the event that the tolling authorities are unable to agree upon a toll rate.

These provisions must be in any agreement reached by the tolling authorities regarding the CRC, regardless of when the agreement was initially signed by both parties.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.