

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2095

As of March 29, 2017

Title: An act relating to preliminary work to develop a process for planning for a new Interstate 5 bridge spanning the Columbia river.

Brief Description: Concerning preliminary work to develop a process for planning for a new Interstate 5 bridge spanning the Columbia river.

Sponsors: Representatives Wylie, Stonier, Harris, Vick, Clibborn, Fey, McBride and Macri.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/17, 60-38.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/28/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a Joint Oregon-Washington legislative action committee to address many purposes, including beginning a process towards project development for a new Interstate 5 (I-5) bridge over the Columbia River.
- Appropriates \$350,000 for Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to do a planning inventory to document data related to the construction of a new I-5 bridge over the Columbia River.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: The I-5 Bridge crosses the Columbia River and connects Vancouver, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, with two identical bridge structures. One bridge structure carries traffic northbound to Vancouver; the other bridge structure carries traffic southbound to Portland. The northbound bridge was built in 1917; the southbound bridge was built in 1958. The bridges both include one vertical lift span.

In 1997, a process was enacted to expedite the development of industrial projects of statewide significance. To qualify for designation as a project of statewide significance, a project must meet capital investment or job creation requirements. Border-crossing projects, private projects investing in manufacturing, research, and development, projects that will provide a net environmental benefit, and a project that will further commercialization of an

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innovation may all be designated as projects of statewide significance. An application for designation as a project of statewide significance must be submitted to the Department of Commerce. The application must include a letter of approval from jurisdictions where a project is located and must commit to providing the local staff necessary to expedite the completion of a project.

Counties and cities requesting a project's designation as one of statewide significance must ensure the participation of local officials on the public-private team expediting a project's completion. Counties and cities with projects must enter into agreements with the Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA) and local project managers to expedite the processes necessary for the design and construction of projects. ORA must provide facilitation and coordination services to expedite completion of industrial projects of statewide significance. The project proponents may provide the funding necessary for the local jurisdiction to hire the staff required to expedite the process.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Striking Amendment): The process for designating a project of statewide significance is modified to allow for legislative designation. Projects of statewide significance that are designated by the Legislature are exempted from the application requirements.

An invitation is provided from the Washington Legislature to the Oregon Legislature to participate in a joint legislative action committee regarding the construction of a new I-5 Bridge. The committee is tasked with achieving the following purposes:

- work with both states' departments of transportation, transportation commissions, and stakeholders to begin a process toward project development, with the first meeting occurring by December 15, 2017;
- review and confirm lead roles related to permitting, construction, operation, and maintenance of a future I-5 Bridge project;
- establish a process to seek public comment on the I-5 Bridge project development plan;
- work to ensure that there are sufficient resources available to the state departments of transportation to inventory and utilize existing data to allow for nonduplicative and efficient decision-making regarding a new project;
- examine all potential mass transit options available for a new I-5 Bridge project;
- utilize design-build procurement or better innovative project delivery method and determine the least costly, most efficient project management and best practices tools;
- consider the creation of a Columbia River bridge authority to review bridge needs and make recommendations to both states regarding financing, timing of improvements, and operations of the bridges; and
- report to the Legislatures of each state the findings and recommendations of the legislative action committee by December 15, 2018. The report must contain a recommendation on whether the I-5 Bridge project should be designated as a project of statewide significance.

The joint legislative action committee is comprised of 16 members, 8 from each state. The Majority Leader and Minority Leader of each Senate must appoint four members, two from

each of the two largest caucuses. The Speaker and Minority Leader of each House of Representatives must appoint four members, two from each of the two largest caucuses. Staff support must be provided by the House Office of Program Research, Senate Committee Services, and the Oregon Legislative Policy and Research Office, and executive branch agencies, including the departments of transportation and the transportation commissions, must cooperate with the committee and provide assistance as reasonably requested. Each meeting of the joint legislative action committee must allow an opportunity for public comment, and meetings must be scheduled and conducted in accordance with the requirements of each House of Representatives and Senate.

The WSDOT must conduct a planning inventory to document existing planning data related to the construction of a new I-5 Bridge. The WSDOT must report back to the Legislature on the details of the planning inventory.

Appropriation: The sum of \$350,000 from the Motor Vehicle Fund is appropriated to the WSDOT for a planning inventory.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: Yes.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is an important bill for both southwest Washington and the state as a whole. I was part of the group that killed the bridge and I am here to try to resurrect this bridge. I find when I am wrong it is often harder to make things right again. We need to build a new bridge. I would advocate for a mass transit component and this is open for discussion. Oregon needs this bridge too.

We need to improve freight mobility, and the problem of I-5 congestion is getting exponentially worse. The most important initiative for Clark County businesses is fixing the I-5 corridor and replacing the current bridge. The Port of Vancouver passed a unanimous resolution supporting the replacement of this bridge. This area is in the process of developing a new comprehensive economic development plan. As part of the work of this plan, congestion has been identified as the number one issue hindering growth of the region. We function as a regional economy of the greater Portland area, and we need a new bridge to address the congestion that is hindering growth and economic development.

We appreciate the commitment to work with the state of Oregon. We continue to be frustrated with a lack of capacity. This bridge is the only place on I-5 where the interstate can get shut down because someone wants to move a sailboat. Our business day is compressed to a three hour window if we need to go into Portland. The congestion negatively impacts veterans' ability to get to the treatment center for care. You have a very narrow window if you don't want to sit in congestion for hours.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Ryan Hart, Port of Vancouver USA; Brittany Bagent, Dir. Research and Econ Dev - Columbia River EDC; John Blom, Councilor, Clark County; Ed

Barnes, Pres., SW WA Labor Roundtable; John Rudi, Pres., Thompson Metal Fabricators; Representative Paul Harris, 17th Legislative District.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: PRO: Billy Wallace, Washington & Northern Idaho District Council of Laborers.