

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5104

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, February 5, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to prohibiting local governments from imposing vehicle tolls.

**Brief Description:** Prohibiting local governments from imposing vehicle tolls.

**Sponsors:** Senators Sheldon, Rolfes, Fortunato, Schoesler and O'Ban.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 1/30/19, 2/05/19 [DPS, DNP].

<p><b>Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill</b></p>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prohibits most local governments from imposing vehicle tolls.</li></ul> |
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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5104 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hobbs, Chair; King, Ranking Member; Sheldon, Assistant Ranking Member; Fortunato, O'Ban, Padden, Randall, Wilson, C. and Zeiger.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Saldaña, Vice Chair; Cleveland, Das, Dhingra, and Nguyen.

**Staff:** Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

**Background:** Under current law, various local governments have authority to impose vehicle tolls under specified conditions.

For example, Transportation Benefit Districts (TBD), established by cities and counties, may impose vehicle tolls on state routes, city streets, or county roads, within the boundaries of the district. If the toll is on a state route, the Legislature must first authorize the tolls, the Washington State Department of Transportation must collect the tolls, and the state Transportation Commission sets the toll rates. If the tolls are on city streets or county roads, then the TBD collects the tolls and sets the toll rates. However, the tolls must first be

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reviewed and approved by the state Transportation Commission if the tolls would have a significant impact, as determined by the Transportation Commission, on the operation of any state facility.

Other examples of local governments with specified tolling authority include cities, port districts, and Regional Transportation Investment Districts within King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties.

**Summary of Bill (First Substitute):** Most local vehicle tolling authority is removed from the Revised Code of Washington, and cities, and counties are specifically prohibited from imposing vehicle tolls.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):**

- Removes port districts from the bill, with the effect being that port districts retain local tolling authority under certain circumstances.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill:** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: The intent of the bill is to prohibit local tolls because local tolls affect everyone, not just those who live in the area. Local tolls are an imposition on local streets that have already been paid for. Seattle wants to do congestion tolling and other big cities have tried this or have proposed it. Imposing tolls on Seattle city streets is a burden on all travelers through there. Ports should be removed from the bill.

OTHER: The Commission has not received any formal toll proposals from local jurisdictions. The bill should include provisions strengthening the requirement to go through the Commission review process for any local tolls.

CON: Port districts are unique and should be removed from the bill. Ports are actively engaged in replacing two bridges over the Columbia River and may need all funding options available. Seattle is looking at addressing congestion resulting from the opening of the SR99 tunnel and should have local options available to it. Local options should remain to fund local transportation needs. Counties are seeing significantly less revenue and the gas tax for counties has been flat for over 20 years. Future revenue declines warrant keeping all local options available.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Tim Sheldon, Prime Sponsor.

CON: Jane Wall, Washington State Association of Counties; Chris Herman, Washington Public Ports Association; Bryce Yadon, Futurewise.

OTHER: Reema Griffith, Transportation Commission.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.