

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5255

As of January 31, 2019

Title: An act relating to prohibiting road usage charges in rural counties.

Brief Description: Prohibiting road usage charges in rural counties.

Sponsors: Senators Sheldon, Honeyford and Short.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/30/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits imposing or collecting a road usage charge or similar type of fee in rural counties.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: The Transportation Commission is currently conducting a road usage charge (RUC) pilot project. The RUC is being explored as a potential gas tax replacement. Approximately 2000 drivers are participating in the year-long RUC pilot project and are currently reporting their mileage and providing feedback. In 2019, the pilot is expected to be completed. In 2020, the Transportation Commission is expected to provide a report and make recommendations regarding the RUC pilot project.

A rural county is defined as a county with a population density of less than 100 persons per square mile or a county smaller than 225 square miles as determined by the Office of Financial Management. As of April 1, 2018, thirty of Washington's counties meet rural county criteria.

Summary of Bill: The state of Washington is prohibited from imposing or collecting any new RUC, vehicle miles traveled fee, or other similar type of comparable charge, tax, or fee, in rural counties.

Appropriation: None.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 22, 2019.

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: PRO: The people in rural counties have to drive more miles and have less fuel efficient vehicles. Any type of vehicle miles fee would disproportionately impact them. The people in these counties do not support this intrusive funding proposal.

CON: This prohibition would actually disproportionately impact rural drivers because it ties those drivers to the gas tax. This kind of fairness issue should be addressed after the information from the RUC pilot is available.

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

CON: Jane Wall, Washington State Association of Counties; Bryce Yadon, Transportation Choices Coalition.

OTHER: Reema Griffith, Transportation Commission.

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