

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5980

As of March 6, 1995

Title: An act relating to a performance audit of the department of transportation.

Brief Description: Requiring a performance audit of the department of transportation.

Sponsors: Senators Strannigan, Owen, McCaslin, Wood, Long, Schow, Deccio, Finkbeiner, Roach, Loveland, Oke, Prince, Haugen, Morton, McDonald, A. Anderson, Palmer, Prentice, West, Moyer, Johnson, Hale, Hochstatter, Swecker, Cantu, Franklin, Kohl, Winsley and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/27/95.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Stan Pynch (786-7512)

Background: Authority and responsibility for performance assessment, performance audits, and performance improvement is vested in a number of agencies within state government.

The Legislature created the Washington Performance Partnership (WPP) in 1994, setting forth the expectation that Washington State government be the most effective and best performing state government in the United States, measured in terms of quality of customer service, accountability for cost-effective services, and productivity. The WPP is a two-tracked process for the long-term improvement of state government. The first area of effort is to clarify the purpose, goals, basic services, priorities, and values of state government, consistent with the desires of the public. The second area of effort is a focus on improving performance of programs and services by clarifying objectives, measuring performance, analyzing and improving processes, redesigning systems, and removing barriers to performance.

In addition, the Legislative Budget Committee is authorized to conduct performance audits, program evaluations, and management surveys, all of which are intended to provide independent examination of agency and program performance, along with recommendations for improvement.

Currently, the State Auditor is authorized to conduct performance verifications to verify the accuracy of measurements and reports used by agencies in measuring their performance. Such performance verifications must be specifically authorized by the Legislature in the omnibus biennial appropriations act.

Summary of Bill: The Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC) is required to contract for an independent and objective performance audit of the Department of Transportation. The performance audit must be designed to determine whether the department's programs

and activities are achieving the results intended by the Legislature and the Transportation Commission, making efficient and effective use of resources, and complying with applicable laws and standards.

The LTC must report the results of the performance audit to appropriate legislative committees by September 1, 1996. The report must include recommendations for improving performance and accountability.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 20, 1995.

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

Testimony For: A performance audit of the Department of Transportation is necessary to address questions and concerns of the public and the Legislature. The department supports the bill. If the department is wrong in its approach to any program or operation, changes are necessary. An audit will also communicate what is working well. The audit will require the correct expertise.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Strannigan, prime sponsor; Sid Morrison, Secretary of Transportation.