

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1830

As Reported by House Committee On:
Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness

Title: An act relating to creating the emergency transportation grant program.

Brief Description: Creating the emergency transportation grant program.

Sponsors: Representatives O'Brien, Pearson and Anderson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness: 2/14/07, 2/21/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Emergency Transportation Grant Program to improve the ability of public and private ambulance services to respond in the event of a disaster.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives O'Brien, Chair; Hurst, Vice Chair; Pearson, Ranking Minority Member; Ross, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Goodman and Lovick.

Staff: Alison Hellberg (786-7152).

Background:

The Department of Health (DOH) licenses ambulance services. Licenses are valid for two years and are renewed on request if the holder has consistently complied with the applicable state regulations and has met the needs of the area satisfactorily. Public emergency response agencies have received increased funds to improve their ability to respond to disasters. Private ambulance services are not eligible to receive these public funds.

Summary of Bill:

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.

The Emergency Transportation Grant Program (Program) is established in the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (Department) to improve the ability of public and private ambulance services to respond in the event of a disaster. The Department must submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature describing projects funded by the Program.

Activities and training funded through this Program must achieve measurable goals in one or more of the following areas:

- the preparedness of ambulance services to meet the needs of state and local emergency management officials in the event of a disaster;
- the capacity of ambulance services to quickly increase their service levels to meet the increased demand caused by a disaster; or
- the ability of ambulance services to redistribute ambulances from areas unaffected by a disaster to areas affected by the disaster.

The Department will award grants on a competitive basis. Grant applications must address:

- a description of the geographic area covered by the ambulance services, the current level of ambulance services in the area, and their ability to meet the needs of the area in an event of a disaster; and
- an explanation of the measurable goals to be achieved by the grant funds and a description of the necessary performance measures needed to effectively monitor whether the goals are being achieved.

Sixteen percent of the revenue generated from tax collected on tobacco products will be deposited in the Emergency Transportation Grant Account to fund the Program. The Department may also receive gifts, grants, and endowments for the use and benefit of the Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) During disasters elderly and isolated people are taken care of by private ambulance services. The services often fill the void when public agencies are responding to other issues. Private ambulances across the state provide primary 911 response and are integral in emergency response with fire departments. This bill would greatly increase their ability to respond.

It is important for emergency preparedness to expand to transportation issues. The Puget Sound region has the worst transportation planning in the U.S. More people die each year due to this lack of planning.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative O'Brien, prime sponsor; Will Knedlik, Washington Ambulance Association; and William Woodcock, Advanced Life Systems and Washington Ambulance Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.