
Transportation Committee

HB 1018

Brief Description: Modifying the maximum amount for grants provided to airports and air navigation facilities.

Sponsors: Representatives Dent, Gregerson, Hargrove, Tarleton, Pike and Klippert.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases the allowable grant amount, from \$250,000 to \$750,000, that the Department of Transportation may provide for general aviation projects through the Airport Aid Grant Program.

Hearing Date: 1/12/17

Staff: Patricia Hasan (786-7292).

Background:

The Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is responsible for the general supervision over the Airport Aid Grant Program (Program), which provides financial assistance to public-use airports in Washington. Any city, county, airport authority, political subdivision, federally recognized Indian tribe, public corporation, or person(s) that owns and operates a public-use airport included in the Washington Aviation System Plan is considered an eligible airport sponsor within the Program and may apply for Program funds. The municipality, tribe, or person(s) may act jointly with other municipalities, tribes, or persons to plan or carry out the project. Airport sponsors applying for grants must own or have a long-term lease for the land upon which the project will be completed.

Under the Program, the WSDOT solicits grant applications and awards funds once per year. During odd-numbered years, the WSDOT solicits grant applications from airport sponsors between March and May and announces grant awards by July 15. In even-numbered years, the WSDOT solicits grant applications from airport sponsors between February and March and announces grant awards by May 15. Airport sponsors may submit a grant application at any time

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during the year (outside of the official solicitation period) for consideration in the next grant cycle.

The maximum grant amount the WSDOT can provide to an individual sponsor in a single Program grant is \$250,000. If municipalities, tribes, and/or person(s) are acting jointly on a project, all parties together are considered the individual sponsor. For projects in which the sponsor is seeking only state funds, the sponsor must contribute a minimum 5 percent match of the entire project cost. For projects in which a sponsor receives a federal grant from the federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP), sponsors must provide 10 percent of project costs. The WSDOT may support these projects by providing up to half of the sponsor's match requirement (up to 5 percent of the project funds), as long as the WSDOT's match does not exceed the \$250,000 maximum grant cap.

There are 137 public-use airports eligible to receive funding from the Program. Of these, 64 airports are also eligible to receive federal funding (through the AIP) based on meeting the following criteria: (a) publicly owned, or (b) privately owned but designated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as a reliever, or (c) privately owned but having scheduled service and at least 2,500 annual enplanements. An airport must also be included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) published every two years to be eligible for a federal grant. The remaining 73 public-use airports in Washington are not included in the NPIAS and may receive only state grants. In the 2015-17 biennium, the Program awarded approximately \$3,832,585 in state funding for 96 projects at public-use airports. The final award total amount may change based on a few projects' actual bid amounts; bidding is scheduled for these projects in spring 2017.

In 2013 the WSDOT began an Airport Investment Study to evaluate short- and long-term airport preservation needs at Washington's public-use airports. Analysis of the study resulted in 10 core solutions detailed in an Airport Investment Solution Handbook (Handbook) produced in July 2015. These solutions include public private partnerships, realignment of current transportation revenue allocations, and developing a best management practices guidebook for airports. While increasing the Program grant limit of \$250,000 does not directly support one of these 10 core study solutions, it is a recommendation included in the Handbook. The WSDOT notes that with the Program's current grant limit, (1) the WSDOT is not able to fully fund the state's typical 5 percent matching share of larger federally funded (through the AIP) projects and (2) smaller airports seeking improvement projects have to phase work over several grant periods, decreasing the efficiency of the implementation of the project and administration of the grants.

Summary of Bill:

The maximum grant amount the WSDOT can provide to an individual sponsor in a single Airport Aid Grant Program grant is increased from \$250,000 to \$750,000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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