

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2594

As Reported by House Committee On:
Technology & Economic Development

Title: An act relating to studying the feasibility of a statewide infrastructure authority.

Brief Description: Studying the feasibility of a statewide infrastructure authority.

Sponsors: Representatives Morris, Hudgins and Wylie.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Technology & Economic Development: 1/17/18, 1/25/18 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the Joint Select Committee on Infrastructure to assess state infrastructure needs and study the feasibility of a statewide infrastructure authority.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Kloba, Vice Chair; Tarleton, Vice Chair; Smith, Ranking Minority Member; DeBolt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Doglio, Fey, Harmsworth, Hudgins, Manweller, McDonald, Nealey, Santos, Slatter, Steele, Wylie and Young.

Staff: Kirsten Lee (786-7133).

Background:

A variety of state agencies manage infrastructure needs in Washington, including the Department of Transportation, the Utilities and Transportation Commission, and the Department of Commerce. These agencies handle issues related to telecommunications, rail, air, roads, bridges, ferries, ports, water and sewer systems, and housing.

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.

Additionally, the Joint Select Committee on Transportation (JTC) reviews and researches transportation programs and issues to better inform state and local government policy makers, including legislators. The JTC and its executive committee consist of the chairs and ranking members of the House Transportation Committee and Senate Transportation Committee. All members of the House and Senate standing committees on transportation may serve on the JTC when appointed by the executive committee.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Joint Select Committee on Infrastructure (JSCI) is created. The committee must study issues relating to: identifying infrastructure needs across the state, including fiber broadband, high-speed rail, and long haul air cargo; assessing organizational models for a new statewide infrastructure authority; funding identified infrastructure development; exploring efficient and legal ways to obtain and store data necessary to create digital cross-system infrastructure maps to be used by a new statewide infrastructure authority to assist in assessing the state's long-term infrastructure needs, particularly areas in need of fiber infrastructure for broadband backhaul services; considering legal aspects of the organizational and funding models; describing potential legislation to implement the infrastructure authority; and identifying an initial list of certain infrastructure projects. The JSCI must make its recommendations to the appropriate legislative committees by December 1, 2019. Staff support is provided by Senate Committee Services and the House of Representatives Office of Program Research. The JSCI may form an advisory committee or contract with additional parties who have technical expertise to perform its duties.

The JSCI consists of eight members, two members from each of the two largest caucuses in the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, and two members from each of the two largest caucuses in the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate. At least two members from each caucus must be members of the House and Senate standing committees on economic development and at least two members from each caucus must be members of the House and Senate standing committees on transportation. The co-chairs of the committee must be the House and Senate chairs of the standing committees on economic development.

The JSCI expires January 1, 2020.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill: (1) changes membership of the JSCI by eliminating membership from the JTC and requiring the chairs of the House of Representatives and Senate standing economic development committees to serve as co-chairs to the committee; (2) requires that the JSCI study and report on efficient ways to obtain and store data necessary for the creation and use of digital cross-system infrastructure maps by the new infrastructure authority to identify state infrastructure needs, including consideration of any legal issues surrounding the data collection and storage; and (3) makes changes to the intent section, broadening the Legislature's strategies and goals as they relate to the development of a new infrastructure authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Washington is lacking a long-term strategic infrastructure vision. Some places are already doing this. The goal with this bill is to have a discussion about the state's infrastructure goals, including a discussion on fiber build-out, long haul air cargo, and high speed rail and to work out an organizational structure and funding mechanism to accomplish the state's these goals.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Morris, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.