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## Transportation Committee

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### HB 2068

**Brief Description:** Providing discounted toll rates to certain individuals on certain tolled facilities.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Ortiz-Self and Kloba.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to provide a 40 percent toll discount to eligible and enrolled individuals travelling on state routes 167, 405, and 509.
- Defines eligible individuals as Washington residents who are also recipients of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Basic Food programs.
- Requires the WSDOT to work with the Department of Social and Health Services to develop and implement a discount toll program to notify and enroll eligible individuals.
- Provides the WSDOT with rulemaking authority to implement the program.

**Hearing Date:** 2/25/19

**Staff:** David Munnecke (786-7315).

#### Background:

##### State Route 167.

In 2008 the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) converted one lane each direction of State Route (SR)167 between Renton and Auburn from a high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane to a high-occupancy toll (HOT) lane. Solo drivers can use a transponder to enter the lane and pay a toll to travel in the HOT lane during peak periods. If the vehicle has two or more people in it, they may travel in the HOT lane for free. There is currently no photo tolling on the SR 167 HOT lanes. The HOT lanes were initiated as a four-year pilot project through 2012, but tolling authorization has been extended in the transportation budget each biennia since.

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*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.*

### Interstate 405.

In 2015 the WSDOT completed a widening and HOV conversion project and began tolling on the express toll lanes (ETLs) on Interstate 405 (I-405) between Bellevue and Lynnwood. Solo drivers can use a transponder to enter the lanes or pay a photo toll to travel in the ETLs during peak periods. If the vehicle has three or more people in it, they may travel in the ETLs for free if they have a transponder set to HOV mode. Some sections of the corridor have one ETL each direction, while some sections have two ETLs each direction.

The 2015 Connecting Washington package funded a similar widening and HOV conversion project for the south half of the I-405 corridor, to construct two ETLs each direction between Renton and Bellevue. The legislative project list funds the project at a \$1.23 billion level, with \$215 million of this expected to be funded by toll revenue. Assuming current law, the south end facility is expected to be open to traffic in 2024.

### Puget Sound Gateway.

The Puget Sound Gateway project was funded at \$1.88 billion in the 2015 Connecting Washington package, and will construct new segments of SR 167 in Pierce County and SR 509 in King County, simultaneously, over a 16-year period. The legislative project list assumes local contributions of \$130 million and toll funding of \$180 million, with the remaining \$1.57 billion paid with gas tax and other vehicle-related fees.

The SR 167 portion of the Puget Sound Gateway project will complete the remaining four miles of SR 167 between North Meridian Avenue in Puyallup and I-5 in Fife. The SR 509 portion will extend the highway between South 188th Street and I-5 in SeaTac, and also includes a spur from I-5 in Fife to SR 509 in Tacoma. Phase 1 of the project is expected to be open to traffic by 2026, with phase 2 open by 2031. Initial tolling analyses assume all lanes would have variable tolling at three photo toll points.

### Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in Washington, provides federal block grants to states in order to support temporary cash assistance, subsidized childcare, and work programs for families. In fiscal year 2018, the average monthly caseload in Washington for the TANF program was 26,030 people.

### Basic Food Program.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is called Basic Food program (BFP) in Washington and is administered by the DSHS, provides nutritional support benefits to low-income individuals and families. In fiscal year 2018, the average monthly number of participating persons in Washington in the BFP was 897,220.

### **Summary of Bill:**

The WSDOT is required to provide a 40 percent toll discount to eligible and enrolled individuals travelling on state routes 167, 405, and 509. Eligible individuals are defined as Washington residents who are also recipients of the TANF or BFP programs.

The WSDOT is required to work with the DSHS to develop and implement a discount toll program to notify and enroll eligible individuals. The WSDOT is granted rulemaking authority to implement the program.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 18, 2019.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on October 1, 2019.