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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5742**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Kauffman, Liias, and Lovick)

AN ACT Relating to codifying certain existing grant programs at the department of transportation; adding new sections to chapter 47.66 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 47.76 RCW; and adding a new section to chapter 47.04 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 47.66 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department shall establish a paratransit and special needs grant program to sustain and expand transit service to people with disabilities.

(2) Of the amounts appropriated to the program, 23 percent shall be provided solely for grants to nonprofit providers of special needs transportation. Grants for nonprofit providers must be based on need, including the availability of other providers of service in the area, efforts to coordinate trips among providers and riders, and the cost-effectiveness of trips provided.

(3) The remaining 77 percent of amounts appropriated to the program shall be provided solely for grants to transit agencies to support persons with special transportation needs. To receive a grant, the transit agency must, to the greatest extent practicable, have a maintenance of effort for special needs transportation that is no less than the previous year's maintenance of effort for special needs transportation. Grants for transit agencies must be prorated based on the amount expended for demand response service and route deviates service published in the most recent publishing of the department's "Summary of Public Transportation" report. No transit agency shall receive more than 30 percent of the distribution.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 47.66 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department shall establish a public transit ride share program. The grant program shall provide resources for:

(a) Public transit agencies to add or replace ride share vehicles; and

(b) Incentives and outreach to increase ride share use.

(2) The grant program for public transit agencies may cover capital costs only and costs for operating vanpools at public transit agencies are not eligible for funding. Awards from the grant shall not be used to supplant transit funds currently funding ride share programs, nor be used to hire additional employees.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 47.76 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department shall establish a freight rail investment bank program to provide low-interest loans to entities based on the legislative priorities as outlined in RCW 47.76.240.

(2) The department shall issue freight rail investment bank program loans with a repayment period of no more than 15 years, and charge only so much interest as is necessary to recoup the department's costs to administer the loans.

(3) The department shall report annually to the transportation committees of the legislature and the office of financial management on all freight rail investment bank loans issued.

(4) Projects shall be evaluated using the following cost-benefit methodology:

(a) Economic, safety, or environmental advantages of freight movement by rail compared to alternative modes;

(b) Self-sustaining economic development that creates family-wage jobs;

(c) Preservation of transportation corridors that would otherwise be lost;

(d) Increased access to efficient and cost-effective transport to market for Washington's agricultural and industrial products;

(e) Better integration and cooperation within the regional, national, and international systems of freight distribution; and

(f) Mitigation of impacts of increased rail traffic on communities.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 47.76 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department shall establish the statewide emergent freight rail assistance program to award grants based on the legislative priorities as outlined in RCW 47.76.240.

(2) Grants shall be selected using the cost-benefit methodology as outlined in section 3 of this act.

(3) The department shall report annually to the transportation committees of the legislature and the office of financial management on all freight rail assistance program grants issued.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 47.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department shall create a bicyclist and pedestrian grant program to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and mobility and increase active transportation trips.

(2) Project types may include, but are not limited to, bicycle facilities such as buffered bike lanes, pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, crossing improvements for people who walk and roll, and speed management.

(3) The department shall report on an annual basis the status of projects funded as part of the bicyclist and pedestrian grant and safe routes to school grant programs. The report must include, but is not limited to, a list of projects selected and a brief description of each project's status.

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