

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1452

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Transportation*

Title: An act relating to high-speed ground transportation.

Brief Description: Creating the high-speed ground transportation steering committee.

Sponsor(s): Representatives R. Fisher, G. Fisher, Cole, Fraser, Phillips, Rust, Haugen, Belcher, Hine, R. Meyers, Locke, Riley, Heavey, R. Johnson, Wilson, Betrozoff, Valle, Wynne, R. King, Scott, Cooper, Pruitt, Ogden, Roland, Nelson, Spanel, Brekke and Wineberry.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Transportation, February 20, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1452 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 23 members: Representatives R. Fisher, Chair; R. Meyers, Vice Chair; Betrozoff, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brough; Cantwell; Cooper; Day; G. Fisher; Forner; Horn; P. Johnson; R. Johnson; Jones; Kremen; Mitchell; Nelson; Orr; Prentice; Prince; Schmidt; Wood; and Zellinsky.

Staff: Judy Burns (786-7301).

Background: Major transportation corridors in Washington are reaching unacceptable levels of congestion. Proposed improvements such as extension of the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane system, or regional high capacity systems can, at best, only temporarily reduce the rate at which congestion increases. And such improvements do not address cross-state or other long distance travel demands.

Congestion at Sea-Tac Airport is also reaching unacceptable levels, and it is estimated that the airport will be at capacity by 1998. Currently, 140 take-offs and landings per day are flights between Sea-Tac and Portland. Shifting a majority of those trips to some other mode, such as a high-

speed ground transportation system, would provide significant additional capacity at the airport.

Before the state can seriously consider--or begin planning for--a high-speed ground transportation system, there are a number of major policy issues which must be addressed.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The governor, the chair of the Legislative Transportation Committee, and the chair of the Transportation Commission are directed to jointly appoint a 15-member High-Speed Ground Transportation Steering Committee. Membership must include cities, counties, transit, federal agencies, and the private sector. The governor or designee, four legislators, and the chair of the Transportation Commission are voting liaison members. In addition, the governor is directed to seek non-voting liaison representation from British Columbia and Oregon.

The steering committee is directed to study the feasibility of establishing a high-speed ground transportation system, and a number of major policy issues to be addressed by the steering committee are spelled out.

An Office of High-Speed Ground Transportation is created within the Department of Transportation, to provide technical and administrative support to the steering committee.

The steering committee is required to present its final report by October 15, 1992. The report must include findings, recommended plan for implementation, and proposed legislation to implement the next phase of a high-speed ground transportation program.

The Air Transportation Commission (ATC) enabling legislation, Chapter 298, Laws of 1990, is amended to delete specific direction for the ATC to study high speed ground transportation.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill specifies the steering committee membership should also include the secretary of Transportation, as well as representatives of public ports and railroad companies.

An additional charge to the steering committee is to identify specific sources of funding--existing or new--if public sector funding is recommended.

The date for the committee's final report is advanced from December 15 to October 15, 1992.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 20, 1991.

Appropriation: Yes.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Now is an appropriate time to begin exploring the many policy issues, such as land use and environmental concerns, which must be addressed before detailed planning for any major new transportation facility can proceed.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Jim Toohey, Department of Transportation; Hal Cooper; Dick Goldsmith, Washington State Transit Association; Pat Halstead, Burlington Northern and Union Pacific Railroads; and Dean Claussen.