

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1677

*As Passed House
March 15, 1991*

Title: An act relating to high capacity transportation funding and planning.

Brief Description: Updating population criteria for high capacity transportation programs.

Sponsor(s): By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Cooper, R. Fisher, Peery, Ogden, H. Myers, Morris, Jacobsen and Winsley).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Transportation, February 27, 1991, DPS;
House Second Reading, March 13, 1991;
Passed House, March 15, 1991, 83-15.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1677 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; Basich; Cantwell; Cooper; Day; G. Fisher; Forner; Haugen; Heavey; Horn; P. Johnson; Jones; Kremen; Mitchell; Nelson; Orr; Prentice; Prince; Wilson; Wood; and Zellinsky.

Minority Report: *Do not pass.* Signed by 2 members: Representatives Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member and Schmidt.

Staff: Gene Baxstrom (786-7303).

Background: HB 1825, enacted in 1990, prescribed a process for transit systems to assess the need for, and to plan high capacity transportation (HCT) systems. Agencies in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, Clark and Spokane counties were granted local option taxing powers to fund such systems. The taxing authority is an up to 1 percent sales tax, 0.8 percent motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) and a \$2/month employer tax. The 1990 census will delete Thurston County from this group and will add Skagit County.

HCT agencies conducting planning are required to establish a regional policy committee to guide the planning process. The committees are to reflect proportional representation based on population within the designated systems' service areas.

Oversight of high capacity planning is required by a 10-member Expert Review Panel (ERP) appointed jointly by the governor, the secretary of transportation and the chair of the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC). The ERP is to evaluate the legitimacy of forecasts, cost estimates, and conclusions reached in the analysis of alternatives prepared regarding high capacity investments. The ERP is to report to the state appointers and the agency whose planning is being evaluated.

Funding to conduct high capacity planning by transit agencies is provided from the High Capacity Transportation Account (HCTA). Account funds are generated by a reduction in the amount of MVET, from 0.89 percent to 0.7824 percent, for which public transportation agencies located in King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston counties can qualify. These counties are identified by class of county, and the 1990 census will delete Thurston County from this group and add Skagit. The amount of the reduction for all systems, approximately \$7 million per biennium, is deposited in the HCTA.

Summary of Bill: The number of transit systems contributing to the High Capacity Transportation Account through a reduction in the eligible motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) rate is changed to include those in King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, Clark, Spokane, and Kitsap counties. Everett Transit is not affected.

Transit systems outside the central Puget Sound area may designate a metropolitan planning organization as the regional policy committee for high capacity transportation (HCT) planning.

Instead of 10 members, the number of members of an Expert Review Panel (ERP) may be from five to 10. For planning efforts involving counties adjoining another state or nation, the ERP is to be selected cooperatively with representatives of the adjoining state or nation. ERP comments and conclusions are to be provided to representatives of those entities.

Local taxing authority for HCT systems is extended to transit systems in Yakima and Kitsap Counties and removed from Skagit County. King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, Spokane, Clark, Yakima, and Kitsap counties are included.

A section to repeal RCW sections in Substitute House Bill 1201 common to this bill is added.

Language identifying counties is modeled after SHB 1201.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 28, 1991.

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

Testimony For: Transit systems in more counties would be allowed to contribute to the High Capacity Transportation Account. Funds in the account will assist with local high capacity transportation planning efforts. The authority to utilize existing metropolitan planning organizations will allow use of accepted local planning groups and will eliminate the need to appoint unnecessary groups.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Les White, C-Tran, Clark County; and Jim Slakey, Department of Transportation.