

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2932

C 142 L 92
Synopsis As Enacted

Brief Description: Revising the Washington technology center.

By Representatives Cantwell, Forner, Rasmussen, Ludwig and Paris.

House Committee on Trade & Economic Development
Senate Committee on Commerce & Labor

Background: In Washington State, several organizations play a role in public technology development and commercialization efforts. The University of Washington and Washington State University do an extensive amount of basic research, most of which is funded by the federal government. Both universities have offices that attempt to identify and protect research that has commercial potential.

In 1983, the Legislature created the Washington Technology Center (WTC) to form a university-industry-government partnership to conduct research that has a greater likelihood of being commercially applicable than traditional research done solely by a university. The WTC is headquartered at the University of Washington and is administered by a board of directors appointed by the University of Washington (UW) Board of Regents. State funding for the WTC is administered by the Department of Trade and Economic Development. Since its inception, the WTC has received approximately \$47 million from the state.

The Department of Trade and Economic Development, as directed by the Legislature, recently completed two reports analyzing the state role in technology development and commercialization and assessing the Washington Technology Center. The assessment, done through Battelle, concludes that the Washington Technology Center is a viable organization and makes several recommendations including. The assessment recommends that: (1) the WTC develop a strategic plan; (2) the WTC give increased emphasis to technology commercialization and transfer; (3) the WTC respond to its mandate for education and training; (4) the WTC increase accountability; (5) the WTC evaluate the number of centers and strongly consider reducing that number to better use limited resources; (6) the WTC build direct lines of communication between the universities, industry, and

state government; and (7) the WTC operations and organizational structure be refined.

Summary: The enabling legislation creating the Washington Technology Center (WTC) is modified. The mission of the Washington Technology Center is to perform and commercialize research on a statewide basis that benefits the intermediate and long-term economic vitality of the state. The Washington Technology Center is also to develop and strengthen university-industry relationships through conducting research that primarily benefits Washington-based companies.

The WTC board of directors, whose primary duty is to administer the WTC, is made an independent board appointed by the governor. The board is comprised of 14 representatives of technology-based industries, eight representatives of state universities, the executive director of the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute, the provost of the University of Washington and Washington State University, and the director of the Department of Trade and Economic Development. The term of each of the 14 industry and eight academic representatives is three years.

The Department of Trade and Economic Development is to provide guidance to the WTC regarding development of the center's strategic plan. The department is also responsible to the Legislature for the public contractual performance of the WTC. The department is to contract with the University of Washington board of regents for expenditures of state-appropriated funds for operation of the WTC.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	98	0	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House			(House refused to concur)

Conference Committee

Senate	48	0
House	97	0

Effective: June 11, 1992