

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1452

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, APRIL 4, 1991

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

SPONSORS: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by 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).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chairman; Nelson, Vice Chairman; von Reichbauer, Vice Chairman; Madsen, McMullen, Oke, Sellar, Skratek, Snyder, Thorsness, and Vognild.

Staff: Judy Burns (786-7301)

Hearing Dates: March 21, 1991; April 4, 1991

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:

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 nonvoting 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, a 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.

Appropriation: \$1 million from the transportation fund-state

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

"Economic development implications" is added to the list of issues to be addressed by the steering committee. The steering committee is directed to obtain private sector contributions for the study of at least \$500,000. The state transportation fund appropriation is reduced from \$1 million to \$500,000 and expenditure of state funds is limited to \$75,000 until the required private sector funding is obtained.

TESTIMONY FOR:

There are a number of major policy issues (land use, financing, environmental impacts, etc.) which must be addressed prior to any decisions regarding high-speed ground transportation in the state. Creation of the Steering Committee, representing a broad spectrum of interest groups, will provide the Legislature and the Governor with analyses of these major policy issues. To date, there has not been a thorough study of these issues relative to high speed systems (180+ miles/hour).

Congress has authorized \$500,000 for Washington to undertake a study of such systems, with the requirement that the federal

funds be matched by the state. With the striking amendment, the bill provides for a three-way partnership of federal, state, and private sectors to fund the Steering Committee activities.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Ruth Fisher, prime sponsor; Duane Berentson, Department of Transportation; Jim Toohey, Department of Transportation