

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2932

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR, FEBRUARY 27, 1992

Brief Description: Revising the Washington technology center.

SPONSORS: Representatives Cantwell, Forner, Rasmussen, Ludwig and Paris

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Matson, Chairman; Anderson, Vice Chairman; Bluechel, McDonald, McMullen, Murray, and Skratek.

Staff: Traci Anderson (786-7452)

Hearing Dates: February 27, 1992

BACKGROUND:

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 conducted solely by a university.

The WTC is headquartered at the University of Washington. Statutorily, the Board of Regents of the University of Washington (UW) has the ultimate responsibility for the administration of the WTC. However, much of the responsibility for the administration of the WTC has been delegated to its Board of Directors and the Executive Director. The WTC Board is appointed by the UW Board of Regents. It consists of 14 business representatives and 11 university representatives.

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 an assessment of the WTC. This evaluation, completed by Battelle, concludes that the WTC is a viable organization but identifies a number of areas in need of improvement, such as the overall mission and goals, the governance and administration, and the level of involvement and support by industry in the WTC. The report provides a number of recommendations for improving the operation of the WTC, including the following: developing a strategic plan that crafts a vision for the WTC; increasing emphasis to technology commercialization and transfer;

responding to its mandate for education and training; refining operations and organization; increasing the involvement and support of industry.

SUMMARY:

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

The Department of Trade and Economic Development provides 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. Under contract with the department, the Board of Regents administers the WTC. The WTC board is responsible for the operations of the WTC.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENTS:

The WTC is administered by the board of directors of the WTC. The members of the board consist of 14 industry representatives, nine university representatives, the Executive Director of the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute, the UW Provost, and the Director of the Department of Trade and Economic Development. The board members are appointed by the Governor based on the recommendations of the existing board of the WTC, the research universities and the high technology industry.

The University of Washington, Washington State University and other participating universities provide the staff, faculty and facilities required to support the operations of the WTC.

The Department of Trade and Economic Development contracts with and provides guidance to the WTC regarding the expenditure of state appropriated funds.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR: None

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: No one