
SENATE BILL 5395

State of Washington

53rd Legislature

1993 Regular Session

By Senators Skratek and Erwin

Read first time 01/26/93. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to public involvement in transportation planning;
2 and adding new sections to chapter 47.80 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that public
5 involvement in transportation projects is a critical element in
6 developing a state-wide transportation system responsive to the needs
7 of the public. The legislature also recognizes that the department of
8 transportation already provides news releases, newsletters to affected
9 persons, and opportunities to comment at public hearings before project
10 construction, but that these processes primarily occur after a
11 determination of project necessity has already been made. Citizens who
12 may be adversely impacted by the proposed project can express their
13 concerns in the public hearings process, but this process does not
14 provide the public with adequate opportunities to participate in the
15 evaluation and selection of alternatives to the proposed project.

16 The legislature finds that current methods of public input do not
17 yield results that accurately reflect public opinion and sentiment on
18 transportation projects. The legislature further finds that the
19 transportation needs of the citizens of the state are best identified

1 and served by encouraging meaningful public participation and comment
2 at the earliest stages of the transportation planning process.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department shall actively solicit
4 public input concerning selected transportation projects. In seeking
5 public input, the department shall conduct the following activities:

6 (a) On projects selected under section 3 of this act, hold
7 informational meetings and conduct "visioning" workshops before a
8 preferred transportation solution has been identified to better ensure
9 that public involvement occurs at a meaningful phase of the planning
10 process, as required under the federal Intermodal Surface
11 Transportation and Efficiency Act of 1991 and as intended by the
12 legislature in section 1 of this act;

13 (b) On projects selected under section 3 of this act, the
14 department shall mail written surveys to, and solicit telephone surveys
15 from, a representative sample of citizens impacted by the proposed
16 transportation project for purposes of measuring public opinion;

17 (c) Employ additional activities, including any modern marketing
18 techniques, that the department believes will accomplish the purposes
19 of section 1 of this act.

20 (2) The department may employ consultants or marketing specialists
21 to conduct activities required under sections 2 through 5 of this act
22 only upon a finding that the activities require specialized knowledge,
23 skill, or technology, and that the activities cannot be accomplished
24 with existing departmental resources.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Selected transportation projects requiring
26 the heightened public involvement process described in section 2(1) of
27 this act must include the following category C projects: (1) Projects
28 that would affect significant numbers of people or businesses through
29 disruption or displacement, including capacity improvement projects;
30 (2) projects that alter access to roads or highways, or that require
31 the acquisition of rights of way; and (3) projects impacting
32 environmentally sensitive areas.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The department shall collect accurate data
34 and record comments received through the public involvement process
35 required by section 2 of this act. The department shall compile the
36 information and forward it at the earliest opportunity for

1 consideration in the development of any state or regional
2 transportation plan, or for the selection of a preferred transportation
3 alternative. It is the intent of the legislature that all information
4 gathered under sections 2 through 5 of this act be incorporated into
5 the department's transportation planning process at an early and
6 meaningful stage of deliberation.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** In addition to the duties outlined in
8 section 2 of this act, the department shall make increased efforts to
9 provide information to the citizens of the state. The department
10 shall:

11 (1) Establish toll-free information telephone lines within each
12 district office that are capable of providing information about
13 proposed transportation projects in the region, and about
14 transportation projects under construction and any resulting traffic
15 rerouting; provide information concerning opportunities for public
16 participation in state-wide, regional, or local transportation
17 planning; and provide a mechanism allowing callers to leave their
18 comments and opinions concerning transportation issues on a recording
19 device;

20 (b) Conduct a state-wide public opinion poll that seeks to identify
21 citizen preferences concerning state-wide modes and methods of
22 transportation. The survey shall also seek a citizen evaluation of the
23 department, including a measurement of whether and to what extent the
24 department is meeting its mission statement, goals, and objectives
25 concerning state transportation policy and services.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** No provisions of sections 1 through 5 of
27 this act may be considered in lieu of the department's legal
28 responsibilities for conducting public hearings and providing
29 opportunities for comment required under state or federal law.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 1 through 6 of this act are each
31 added to chapter 47.80 RCW, which shall be renamed "Transportation
32 Planning."

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