
Transportation Committee

HB 1015

Brief Description: Establishing a joint safety rest area demonstration project.

Sponsors: Representatives Nixon and Woods.

Brief Summary of Bill

- The Secretary of the Washington State Department of Transportation must solicit proposals from private and nonprofit entities for a joint safety rest area demonstration project.

Hearing Date: 2/6/03

Staff: Reema Griffith (786-7301).

Background:

During the 1960's, the federal government provided significant funding for the construction of safety rest areas as part of the interstate system in Washington State. Most of these rest areas were built during this time period but later also included roads on the national highway system.

Currently, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) owns and operates 42 safety rest areas within Washington State. Of the 42 safety rest areas, twenty-nine are located on the interstate system, ten are on the national highway system, and the remaining three are on state routes.

Approximately 77 million customers visit Washington's safety rest areas each biennium. The WSDOT's costs for maintaining and operating the safety rest areas will be approximately \$8.5 million dollars for the 2003-2005 biennium.

Summary of Bill:

The Secretary of the WSDOT must solicit proposals from private and nonprofit entities for a joint safety rest area demonstration project. In implementing the demonstration project, the Secretary will negotiate and enter into agreements with private or nonprofit entities to provide safety rest area services.

The WSDOT may enter into an agreement if it is determined that the proposal is in the public's interest, will not impair the safety or operation of the highway, interfere with the free and safe flow of traffic, and is consistent with access control standards.

The negotiated agreements must include the following provisions:

- The safety rest area provider must give the WSDOT fair market value consideration for any access rights or use of WSDOT property.
- The Department and the safety rest area provider must enter into a lease agreement if the project involves property owned by the WSDOT.
- The safety rest area service provided must meet the WSDOT requirements, at no cost to the Department.
- The Department's volunteer refreshment program must be allowed to continue operating at the safety rest area.
- The term of the agreement may not exceed twenty years.

All revenues provided to the WSDOT from the demonstration project must be deposited into the Motor Vehicle Fund. The WSDOT must provide an initial status report to the House and Senate Transportation Committees by December 1, 2004, and annually thereafter.

The demonstration project is exempt from the state contracting-out provisions and the statutory requirement for giving priority for vending machine operations to Services for the Blind.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.