

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5296

As of January 23, 2003

Title: An act relating to removing barriers to transportation services.

Brief Description: Removing barriers to transportation services.

Sponsors: Senators Horn, Haugen, Kline and Esser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Highways & Transportation: 1/23/03.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Tami Neilson (786-7452)

Background: The Legislature and the Governor formed the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation in 1998 to assess the local, regional, and state transportation system; ensure that current and future money is spent wisely; make the system more accountable and predictable; and prepare a 20-year plan for funding and investing in the transportation system.

One of the commission's recommendations directed the Washington State Department of Transportation to use the private sector to deliver projects and transportation services.

Current law prohibits a person or private corporation from operating a local public passenger transportation service within a public transportation benefit area, unless an agreement is entered into between the public transportation benefit area and the transportation service provider. Taxis, buses owned or operated by a school district or private school, and buses operated solely for the purposes of a corporation or organization may be operated within a public transportation benefit area without an agreement.

Current law also prohibits the operation of any ferry operation within ten miles of a ferry crossing provided by the Washington State Ferries (WSF), unless the operator receives a waiver from the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC). Any ferry operator assuming the operation and maintenance of a ferry or ferry system by rent, lease, or charter from WSF is bound by WSF's contractual obligations.

Summary of Bill: A person or private corporation may operate a local public passenger transportation service within a public transportation benefit area without entering into an agreement with the public transportation benefit area. WUTC has jurisdiction over a privately owned carrier operating within a public transportation benefit area.

Ferry operations within ten miles of a ferry crossing provided by WSF are permitted. Any ferry operator assuming the operation and maintenance of a ferry or ferry system by rent, lease, or charter from WSF is not bound by WSF's contractual obligations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.