
Transportation Committee

HB 1694

Brief Description: Requiring the agency council on coordinated transportation to coordinate special needs transportation.

Sponsors: Representatives Flannigan, Upthegrove and Kenney.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Reauthorizes the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (Council) by extending the termination date from June 30, 2007, to June 30, 2017.
- Repeals the Program for Agency Coordinated Transportation.
- Modifies and streamlines the Council's duties, and requires the Council to submit a progress report to the Legislature by December 1, 2009.
- Beginning July 1, 2007, and every other year thereafter, requires that each regional transportation planning organization submit to the Council an updated plan that includes elements identified by the Council.

Hearing Date: 2/8/07

Staff: Kathryn Leathers (786-7114).

Background:

State coordination requirements

In 1998, the Legislature created the Program for Agency Coordinated Transportation (PACT or the Program) and the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT or the Council) for the purpose of improving the efficiency and coordination of transportation systems for persons with special transportation needs, and to facilitate a statewide approach to coordination that supports the development of community-based coordinated transportation systems serving persons with special transportation needs.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

"Persons with special transportation needs" means those persons, including their personal attendants, who, because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation.

The 17-member Council consists of nine voting members and eight non-voting legislative members. The nine voting members are the Secretary of Transportation, who serves as the Chair; the Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services; the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and six members appointed by the Governor, representing consumers of special needs transportation, pupil transportation, the Community Transportation Association of the Northwest, the Community Action Council Association, and the State Transit Association. The eight non-voting legislative members include four House members and four Senators, representing each caucus and the Transportation, House Appropriations, and Senate Ways and Means Committees.

The Council is required to perform various duties, in coordination with stakeholders, designed to assure implementation of the Program. To that end, the Council's duties include: (1) developing guidelines for local planning of coordinated special needs transportation; (2) providing a state-level forum at which state agencies may discuss and resolve coordination and program policy issues; (3) administering and managing grant funds to develop, test, and facilitate the implementation of coordinated systems; (4) identifying barriers to coordinated transportation; and (5) recommending statutory changes to the Legislature to assist in coordinated transportation.

The Council expires on June 30, 2007, and the remainder of the enabling legislation expires on June 30, 2008.

Federal coordination requirements

In 2005, the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted, which conditions receipt of certain federally-funded public transportation grant projects on the establishment of locally-developed, coordinated public transportation plans.

SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the Federal Transportation Administration indicates that each plan should identify special transportation needs, prioritize services, and establish comprehensive strategies for meeting special transportation needs. The new federal requirement is addressed in the planning process of regional transportation planning organizations or metropolitan planning organizations.

Summary of Bill:

The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (the Council) is reauthorized by extending its termination date from June 30, 2007, to June 30, 2017.

The Program for Agency Coordinated Transportation and its duties are repealed.

The Council's duties are streamlined and modified to require the Council to (a) identify and address barriers to facilitating a statewide approach to coordinated transportation systems for persons with special needs; (b) focus on results; (c) increase advocacy for special needs transportation; (d) certify that local plans developed with regional planning organizations meet federal requirements and implement coordinated human service and transportation plans; and (e) submit a progress report to the Legislature by December 1, 2009.

Beginning July 1, 2007, and every other year thereafter, each regional transportation planning organization is required to submit to the Council an updated plan that includes the elements identified by the Council.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.