
Transportation Committee

HB 2004

Brief Description: Providing comprehensive membership of significant jurisdictions on the executive board of regional transportation planning organizations.

Sponsors: Representatives Rolfes, Armstrong, Eddy, Appleton, Clibborn and Jarrett.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that voting membership representatives must be added for certain large cities to the executive board of a regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) if the RTPO includes one or more counties with a population over 1 million.

Hearing Date: 2/22/07

Staff: Kathryn Leathers (786-7114).

Background:

Federal law requires that metropolitan areas greater than 50,000 persons must have a metropolitan planning organization (MPO). This designation is made by the Governor and must have the concurrence of local government officials representing 75 percent of the population within the area, including the central city or as otherwise provided for by state or local law. The formation of these agencies is a precondition for receiving federal highway and transit funds. There are currently 11 MPOs in Washington.

State law authorizes the voluntary association of governments for transportation planning purposes in the form of regional transportation planning organizations (RTPO). The federally-mandated MPOs are designated as the RTPOs under the state's 1990 Growth Management Act (GMA). State requirements for regional transportation planning largely mirror federal requirements. They also include a requirement to certify that the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans conform with the GMA and are consistent with the regional transportation plan.

Each RTPO must (a) encompass at least one county; (b) have a population of at least 100,000 or contain at least three counties; and (c) have as members all counties within the region, and at least

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60 percent of the cities and towns within the region representing at least 75 percent of the combined population of the cities and towns.

In order to qualify for state-planning funds, RTPOs containing a county with a population in excess of 1 million must provide voting membership on its executive board to the state Transportation Commission, the Department of Transportation, and the four largest public port districts within the region, as determined by gross operating revenues. In addition, the RTPO must assure that at least 50 percent of the county and city local elected officials who serve on the executive board also serve on transit agency boards or on a regional transit authority.

The 2006 Legislature added additional executive board voting membership requirements in the biennial budget as a condition for qualifying for state funding to RTPOs containing a county with a population of more than 1 million. Those additional requirements are that voting membership be provided to any incorporated principal city of a metropolitan statistical area within the region, as designated by the United States Census Bureau; and to any incorporated city within the region with a population of more than 80,000. In addition, such RTPOs were directed to review their executive board membership criteria to ensure that the criteria appropriately reflects a true and comprehensive representation of the organization's jurisdictions of significance within the region.

Currently, the only county with a population of over 1 million is King County. The RTPO (and MPO) that contains King County, along with Pierce, Kitsap, and Snohomish counties, is the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). The current PSRC executive board has 32 voting members.

The 2006 legislative executive board voting membership modifications had the effect of adding Bellevue, Renton, Kent, Bremerton, and Federal Way to the PSRC. The 2006 new membership requirements expire with the budget on June 30, 2007.

Summary of Bill:

A RTPO must add voting membership representatives for certain large cities to its executive board if the RTPO includes one or more counties with a population over 1 million. New membership must be provided as follows: in the most populous county within the RTPO region, any city within that county that has a population greater than 3 percent of that county's population; and, in any other county within the RTPO's region, any city that has a population greater than 5 percent of the county in which the city is located.

Executive board voting membership is further modified to require that at least 50 percent of the *weighted vote* attributable to the county and city local elected officials who serve on the executive board also serve on transit agency boards or on a regional transit authority.

The only county with a current population of more than 1 million is King County. As a result, the only RTPO that would be immediately impacted by this legislation is the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). If enacted, the bill would have the effect of requiring that voting membership on the PSRC's executive board be provided for the same cities that were added as a result of the 2006 budget legislation: Bellevue, Renton, Kent, Bremerton, and Federal Way.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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