

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5282

---

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, February 26, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to a single ballot proposition for regional transportation investment districts and regional transit authorities at the 2007 general election.

**Brief Description:** Providing a single ballot proposition for regional transportation investment districts and regional transit authorities at the 2007 general election.

**Sponsors:** Senators Murray, Haugen, Pflug, Jacobsen, Tom and Shin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/01/07, 2/26/07 [DPS, DNP].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5282 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Marr, Vice Chair; Murray, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Clements, Delvin, Kauffman, Kilmer, Pflug, Sheldon and Spanel.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton and Jacobsen.

**Staff:** Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

**Background:** Under current law, certain counties with relatively large populations may create a regional transportation investment district (RTID) for the purposes of planning and financing regional transportation improvements. An RTID is granted several local voter-approved funding options to fund the improvements, including a sales and use tax, vehicle license fee, parking tax, motor vehicle excise tax, employer tax, and vehicle tolls. Eligible projects include capital improvements to highways of statewide significance, including associated multimodal capital improvements, and, under limited circumstances, certain local street, road, and highway improvements. Additionally, operational expenses (e.g., transit services) are allowed for project construction mitigation related to the RTID-funded projects.

The King, Pierce, and Snohomish County Councils voted in 1993 to establish the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (now known as Sound Transit). Sound Transit is vested with high capacity transportation system development authority in the three county

---

*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.*

area, including the imposition of voter-approved taxes for development and operation of such transportation systems.

In 1996, voters in the urban areas of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties approved a plan and authorized funding to provide high capacity transportation services for the central Puget Sound region.

During the 2006 Legislative Session, ESHB 2871 was enacted requiring, among other things, that Sound Transit and the RTID submit to regional voters at the 2007 general election the agencies' respective transit and highway improvement plans. However, the legislation also required both ballot measures to pass in order for either to legally take effect.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee was not considered.

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Transportation):** At the 2007 general election, Sound Transit and the RTID must submit to regional voters their respective transit and highway improvement plans in the form of a single ballot proposition, rather than as two separate ballot measures. However, the single ballot proposition must receive support from a majority of voters within each respective taxing district in order for the proposition to legally take effect. Additionally, the proposition must make clear that each taxing district may only impose taxes within its respective boundaries.

An expedited appeal process, regarding challenges to the ballot process prescribed in the bill, is provided.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: RTID and Sound Transit have been working well this past year to prepare an integrated highways and transit package to submit to the region's voters, per legislative direction from last session. The integrated package is being finalized for a spring 2007 vote by the two respective boards. The package is good for freight and for public mobility in the region. However, explaining the "two vote" mechanism set out in statute by the Legislature, whereby the region's voters must vote once for the RTID package and then vote again for the Sound Transit package, while at the same time explaining that both must pass for either to take effect, is too confusing. The single ballot proposition prescribed under this bill is much easier to explain to voters. Additionally, polls suggest a slightly higher advantage for a successful vote if the two measures are combined into a single ballot proposition. Finally, the expedited appeal process set out in the bill helps facilitate a streamlined approach to ensure enough time is available to get the packages before the voters at the general election.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Dave Gossett, RTID Executive Board; Duke Schaub, Keep WA Rolling and Associated General Contractors of Washington; Joni Earl, Sound Transit.