

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5399

As Passed Senate, March 6, 2007

Title: An act relating to supporting industry clusters as an economic development tool.

Brief Description: Developing a work group to support industry clusters as an economic development tool.

Sponsors: Senators Kilmer, Kastama, Kauffman, Shin, Schoesler, Berkey, Delvin, Rockefeller and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Economic Development, Trade & Management: 1/23/07, 2/2/07 [DP].
Passed Senate: 3/06/07, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE & MANAGEMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Clements, Kauffman and Shin.

Staff: Jacob White (786-7448)

Background: In the spring of 2006, the Governor directed the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to review Washington's workforce development system and recommend improvements. In response, The Workforce Board issued the report "Washington Works: Strengthening the Workforce for Washington's Future." The Workforce Board recommended a series of steps to strengthen the connections between workforce development and economic development programs. The report recommended a new framework for coordination of public investments in workforce and economic development, especially for cluster-based initiatives.

Summary of Bill: The Workforce Board and the Economic Development Commission are to convene a working group to create a framework for the identification of economic clusters, as well as service and resource delivery to the clusters. The working group is to: (1) set the process and criteria for identifying clusters; and (2) identify public resources available to assist clusters and how they can be coordinated.

The industry cluster statute enacted last year to make the identification of clusters consistent with the process and criteria created by this new framework is, also, amended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: In order to raise the prosperity of Washington State, there needs to be innovation, talent, investment, and infrastructure. Supporting clusters is an effective way of meeting these needs. While there is already collaboration between agencies, this bill would be effective in determining a universal definition of what a "cluster" is. This bill will also improve the collaboration among the agencies involved.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Steve Van Ausdle, President of Walla Walla Community College; Don Bennet, Workforce Training and Education Board; Carolyn Cummins, Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, Policy Associate.