

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2815

As Passed House:
February 16, 2016

Title: An act relating to modifying the eligibility requirements for certain counties with ferry terminals to form a regional transportation planning organization.

Brief Description: Modifying the eligibility requirements for certain counties with ferry terminals to form a regional transportation planning organization.

Sponsors: Representatives Hayes, Smith, Lytton and Morris.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/4/16, 2/8/16 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/16/16, 94-4.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a county or counties with a population greater than 75,000 that also contains a Washington State Ferries terminal to form a regional transportation planning organization.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Harmsworth, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregerson, Hayes, Hickel, Kochmar, McBride, Morris, Ortiz-Self, Pike, Riccelli, Rossetti, Sells, Stambaugh, Tarleton and Young.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Shea.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

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.

A regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) is a voluntary association of local governments within a county, or within geographically contiguous counties, created primarily to prepare regional transportation plans, to ensure local and regional coordination of transportation planning, and to maintain a six-year regional transportation improvement program.

An RTPO can cover both urban and rural areas and receives state funding in support of its planning efforts. Federal legislation has created the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). An MPO covers an urbanized area and receives federal funding in support of its planning efforts. In urbanized areas, the RTPO is the same as the MPO designated for federal transportation planning purposes.

An RTPO must contain at least one county and have a population of at least 100,000 or contain at least three counties, have as members all counties in the region, and contain at least 60 percent of the cities and towns in the region representing at least 75 percent of the cities' and towns' populations.

There are currently 14 RTPOs covering 36 of the 39 counties in Washington. Island, Okanogan, and San Juan counties are not part of any RTPO.

Summary of Bill:

A county or counties with a population greater than 75,000 that also contains a Washington State Ferries terminal is allowed to form an RTPO.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2016.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Island County was part of an RTPO, but was voted out. This bill would allow it to form its own RTPO. Skagit County reached the population threshold to form its own RTPO, and it chose to do so.

People have to travel through another county to get between the two islands that make up Island County. Island County thus needs to plan regionally and wants to continue to do so.

Island County has no certainty that it will continue to receive planning funds.

This bill should be expanded to apply to any county that contains a ferry terminal.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Island County has been left by its partner county. Skagit County was previously sharing funding with Island County, but now it gets to keep all of the funding itself.

Smaller counties that form their own RTPOs should have to justify their ability to operate on their own.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Hayes, prime sponsor; Helen Price Johnson, Island County; and Tiffany Speir, Pierce County.

(Other) Jill Johnson, Island County.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.