

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5863

As of February 23, 2015

Title: An act relating to highway construction workforce development.

Brief Description: Concerning highway construction workforce development.

Sponsors: Senators Jayapal, Rivers, Keiser, Miloscia, Conway, Angel, Liias, Pedersen, Hobbs, Kohl-Welles and Hasegawa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/23/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Clint McCarthy (786-7319)

Background: Under current law, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is directed to expend federal funds, and funds that may be available to WSDOT, to increase diversity in the highway construction workforce. To the greatest extent practicable, WSDOT coordinates with the Apprenticeship and Training Council using these funds for the following activities:

- pre-apprenticeship programs approved by the apprenticeship and training council;
- pre-employment counseling;
- orientation on the highway construction industry, including outreach to women, minorities, and other disadvantaged individuals;
- basic skills improvement classes;
- career counseling;
- remedial training;
- entry requirements for training programs;
- supportive services and assistance with transportation;
- child care and special needs;
- job-site monitoring and retention services; and
- assistance with tools, protective clothing, and other related support for employment costs.

WSDOT, in coordination with the apprenticeship and training council, submits a report to the transportation committees of the Legislature by December 1 of each year. The analysis must show the results of activities that increase diversity in the highway construction workforce.

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.

Summary of Bill: WSDOT must coordinate with the Department of Labor and Industries, rather than the Apprenticeship and Training Council, to expend funding for apprenticeship preparation and support services, including grants to local Indian tribes, churches, nonprofits, and other organizations. To the greatest extent practicable, WSDOT must expend funding from sources other than the federal funds that are used under current law. The services that WSDOT provides to increase diversity in the highway construction workforce is expanded to include the recruitment of women and persons of color to participate in the apprenticeship program at WSDOT.

WSDOT must hire and maintain a full-time equivalent position to coordinate department activities that increase diversity in the highway construction workforce and actively engage with communities with populations that are underrepresented in current transportation apprenticeship programs.

The annual report that WSDOT, in coordination with the Department of Labor and Industries, provides to the transportation committees to the Legislature must include an analysis of WSDOT's efforts to coordinate diversity in the highway construction workforce and engage communities with populations that are underrepresented in transportation apprenticeship programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: Apprenticeships are great opportunities for people to get job skills. An aging workforce underscores the need for more investment in apprenticeship programs. Women and minorities need more assistance to get these kind of jobs. There is a wonderful system in Washington for a pre-apprenticeship programs, but they are struggling with a lack of funding. One of the gaps in the system is how well it recruits women and minorities. It is very difficult for pre-apprenticeship programs to come up with sustainable funding.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Lee Newgent, WA Building & Construction Trades; Terry Tilton, NW Carpenters; Joe Kendo, WA State Labor Council; Peter Lahmann, Chair, WA State Apprenticeship Coordinators Assn.; Halene Sigmund, Construction Industry Training Council of WA, Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Employment for Women; Daniel Villao, Commissioner, Commission on Hispanic Affairs; Lee Newgent, WA State Building Trades; Pastor Lawrence Willis, True Vine of Holiness; Lawrence Willis, United Black Christian Clergy of WA, WCLC, SVI; Randy Loomins, Melinda Nichols, Anne Wetmore, citizens.