
Transportation Committee

HB 1443

Brief Description: Mandating the use of unstaffed toll booths that accept credit card payment on the Tacoma Narrows bridge.

Sponsors: Representatives Caldier, Young, Kilduff and Muri.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires two of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge toll booths to be converted to unstaffed toll booths that exclusively accept credit cards for toll payment.
- Requires more toll booths to be so converted if evidence indicates that this will decrease operating costs without adverse effects.

Hearing Date: 2/2/17

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

The oldest span of the current Tacoma Narrows Bridge (TNB) was constructed in 1950. In 1998 voters approved construction of a second TNB span between Tacoma and Gig Harbor. Construction began in 2002, and the new span was opened to traffic in 2007. Tolls are currently collected only for trips from Gig Harbor into Tacoma on the TNB.

Toll revenue from the TNB is required to be used to repay the state's Motor Vehicle Fund for amounts transferred from it to provide for bond retirement and interest on bonds issued for the construction of the TNB. Tolls are required to remain on any facility financed by bonds issued by the state for the length of time necessary to repay the Motor Vehicle Fund for any amounts expended from that fund for the design, development, right-of-way, financing, construction, maintenance, repair, or operation of the toll facility. Repayment of the bonds issued for the construction of the TNB is scheduled to be completed in 2030.

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.

Toll rates for the TNB are set annually by the Washington State Transportation Commission. Tolls on the TNB may be paid electronically using the Good to Go! Pass (\$5 rate), by mail (\$7 rate), or at a toll booth (\$6 rate). Tolls paid at a TNB toll booth may be paid using cash or a credit card, and up to six toll booths may be in operation at any one time.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) must convert at least two TNB toll booths to unstaffed toll booths that exclusively accept credit cards for toll payment. The WSDOT must expand the use of these unstaffed toll booths if an assessment of the rate and volume of credit card transactions and other impacts of the usage of these toll booths demonstrates that their use will result in additional operating cost savings without adverse effects on the overall processing of vehicles through the toll booths.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 2017.

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