

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5896

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 27, 2019

Title: An act relating to shared employer shuttles.

Brief Description: Concerning shared employer shuttles.

Sponsors: Senators Palumbo, Zeiger, Wilson, C. and Hobbs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/19/19, 2/27/19 [DPS, DNP, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Adds shared employee shuttles to the list of passenger transportation services that may be operated in King County by an entity other than King County.
- Requires local transit agencies that have received state funding to allow private employer transportation service vehicles conditional use of a park and ride lot regardless of the capacity of the lot.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5896 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hobbs, Chair; King, Ranking Member; Sheldon, Assistant Ranking Member; Fortunato, O'Ban, Padden, Takko, Wilson, C. and Zeiger.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Saldaña, Vice Chair; Randall.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Cleveland, Das, Lovelett and Nguyen.

Staff: Hayley Gamble (786-7452)

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.

Background: Under current law, King County Metro is the only transit service allowed to operate within the area of a metropolitan municipal corporation performing transportation functions—King County, with exceptions for:

- taxis;
- school buses; and
- buses owned by an organization transporting only that organization's employees with no fee charged.

Agreements can be made, subject to King County approval, for other types of public passenger service. Currently, King County provides a shared employee shuttle agreement.

Park and Ride Lots. Current law requires transit agencies receiving state funding for a park and ride lot to make reasonable accommodation for use of that lot by certain groups, including private employer transportation service vehicles. Use of the lot must not interfere with reliable and safe public transportation operations. An agreement is required between the transit agency and group seeking to use the park and ride. Items in the agreement may include actual costs incurred by a transit agency, fair market value charges, insurance, and other provisions. Accommodation need not be made if the park and ride is at or exceeds 90 percent capacity between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, for two consecutive months.

Private Employer Transportation Service. Private employer transportation service is defined as a regularly scheduled, fixed-route transportation service that is similarly marked or identified to display a business name or logo, meets an annual certification requirements, and is offered by an employer for the benefit of its employees.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): Shared employee shuttle vehicles are added to the list of services allowed to operate without an agreement within the area of a metropolitan municipal corporation performing transportation functions—King County. No prohibition on charging a fee is included.

Vans and other employer transportation service vehicles are added to the types of vehicles a single organization can use for the purposes of that organization.

Private employer transportation service vehicles are allowed conditional use of park and ride lots regardless of the capacity of the lot, when the lot is owned by a local transit agency that received state funding for the park and ride lot. A condition of this use is private employer transportation service vehicles must be serving riders that have arrived or departed the park and ride lot via public transit.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute): Private employer transportation service vehicles are allowed conditional use of park and ride lots regardless of the capacity of the lot, when the lot is owned by a local transit agency that received state funding for the park and ride lot. A condition of this use is private employer transportation service vehicles must be serving riders that have arrived or departed the park and ride lot via public transit.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Shuttles for individual shuttles are already operating, there are businesses that would like to operate shared shuttles. These private shuttles are not asking for any funding. The 405 corridor could use the tools in this bill to ease congestion. This is another option to public transportation. An agreement is still required with a transit agency to use a park and ride. ACES Northwest is a group of tech companies that support this bill. Our plan would be for these shuttles to eventually be electric. This program is an employer funded program to move more people with fewer vehicles. As a professional engineer I support sensible private sector solutions such as employer funded shuttles. This bill will help traffic on I-405 and SR 167. Current law is too restrictive. More employees would take transit if shared employee shuttles were available.

CON: King County and the Washington State Transit Association has serious concerns with this bill. Current statute allows King County to control the transit system in their jurisdiction. This could create a bifurcated system for the few working for certain corporations. Accommodation of private transportation providers at park and rides regardless of capacity is a problem. This will cause 'hide and ride' in neighborhoods. Federal policy requires use of a park and ride to not hinder transit and this bill conflicts with that.

OTHER: DOT has concerns about this bill due to the removal of the limit on requiring accommodation at park and rides if they are at capacity. It would be better to steer private transportation providers to lots that are not at capacity. The Regional Mobility Grant Program includes language that requires an accommodation policy is in place for private transportation providers. This change may decrease mobility at overcrowded lots.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Guy Palumbo, Prime Sponsor; Chris Johnson, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce and East King Chambers; Bruce Agnew, ACES Northwest Network; Scott Kuznicki, citizen; Jim Blundell, T-Mobile; Luke Esser, City of Sammamish.

CON: Michael Shaw, Washington State Transit Association and King County.

OTHER: Brian Lagerberg, Director of Public Transportation, DOT.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.