
Transportation Committee

HB 1546

Brief Description: Concerning allowable uses for the multiuse roadway safety account.

Sponsors: Representatives Eslick, Barkis, Dent, Boehnke, Sutherland, Klicker and Robertson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the eligible purposes for which grants from the Multiuse Roadway Safety Account may be made to include grants to counties to perform maintenance or enhancements on segments of roads, in which the segments are authorized to be used by wheeled all-terrain vehicles (WATV) as part of a travel or tourism route, and grants for the purpose of educational brochures or mapping technology that aids WATV route users.

Hearing Date: 3/11/21

Staff: Mark Matteson (786-7145).

Background:

A wheeled all-terrain vehicle (WATV) is a specific category of off-road vehicle (ORV) that is regulated separately from other ORVs under some aspects of a state law first enacted in 2013 that allows the vehicle to be used for on-road use in addition to off-road use. Wheeled all-terrain vehicles have four wheels and must meet certain specifications to be regulated under state law.

When a WATV is registered for on-road use, the owner must pay a \$12 fee, and the proceeds are deposited into an account called the Multiuse Roadway Safety Account (Account). Moneys in the Account must be appropriated by the Legislature prior to expenditure. Expenditures may be used only for grants administered by the Washington State Department of Transportation

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

(WSDOT) for the following purposes: to counties to perform safety engineering analyses of mixed-vehicle use on public roads; to local governments to provide funding to erect signage related to the presence of WATVs; and to the Washington State Patrol or local law enforcement to defray the costs of enforcement of WATV regulations and of investigation of accidents involving WATVs. The WSDOT must prioritize grant awards: first, for the purpose of marking highway crossings warning motorists of potential WATV crossings, when a WATV recreation facility is on the opposite side of the highway from an ORV recreation facility parking lot; and second, for the purpose of erecting signage to notify motorists of an upcoming intersection at which WATVs may cross.

Six local entities have applied for funding since fiscal year (FY) 2016; these include Okanogan, Lewis, and Pierce counties; and the cities of Granite Falls, Mossyrock, and Sultan. The WSDOT has awarded \$60,000 in grants to these entities for signage purposes. No jurisdictions have applied for grants in the 2019-21 biennium so far.

Revenue to the Account has steadily increased over time. In FY 2014, the first year after enactment of the 2013 legislation, receipts were \$10,888. In FY 2020, receipts were \$170,800.

Summary of Bill:

The eligible uses for which grants may be made from the Account are expanded to include grants to counties to enhance or maintain any segment of a road within a county, in which the segment has been designated as part of a travel or tourism route for use by WATVs, and grants for the purpose of purchasing, printing, developing, or using educational brochures or mapping technology that aids the safety and direction of users of WATV routes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 10, 2021.

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