

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1644

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 23, 2022

Title: An act relating to permitting funds in the transportation vehicle fund to be used for electric and other clean pupil transportation vehicle feasibility planning and fueling station infrastructure.

Brief Description: Permitting funds in the transportation vehicle fund to be used for electric and other clean pupil transportation vehicle feasibility planning and fueling station infrastructure.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Senn, Ybarra, Leavitt, Bateman, Ryu, Shewmake, Ramel, Fitzgibbon, Valdez, Callan, Macri, Peterson, Ramos, Santos, Chopp, Slatter, Bergquist, Tharinger, Harris-Talley and Hackney).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/9/22, 94-2.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/18/22, 2/23/22 [DP, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands allowable uses of school districts' transportation vehicle funds to include purchase, installation, and repair of vehicle charging stations and other zero-emission fueling stations, and feasibility plans to transition to electric or zero-emission vehicles for pupil transportation.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair, K-12; Wilson, C., Vice Chair, Early Learning; Hawkins, Ranking Member; Hunt, Mullet and Pedersen.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Dozier and McCune.

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.

Staff: Alexandra Fairfortune (786-7416)

Background: School District Funds. School districts are required to maintain funds to account for their financial operations. The largest fund is the district's general fund, which accounts for activities not required to be accounted for in a separate fund. Accounts separate from a school district's general fund include the capital projects fund, the debt service fund, the associated student body fund, and the transportation vehicle fund. Each fund may have limits on money that can be deposited into the fund and allowable uses of money expended from the fund.

Transportation Vehicle Fund. Deposits in a school district's transportation vehicle fund may include, but are not limited to, state depreciation payments to reimburse school districts for vehicle purchases, proceeds from the sale of vehicles, and two-year levies for transportation vehicle funds authorized by voters. Allowable uses of money within the transportation vehicle fund include purchases and repairs of pupil transportation vehicles. Vehicle purchases may include electric buses and other alternative fuel vehicles.

Summary of Bill: The allowable uses of school districts' transportation vehicle funds are expanded to include:

- purchase, installation, and repair of electric pupil transportation vehicle charging stations and other zero-emission fueling stations, and other costs necessary for their installation; and
- to complete feasibility plans to transition from gas or diesel pupil transportation vehicles to electric or zero-emission pupil transportation vehicles.

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: PRO: This is a bipartisan bill that is all about local control and the environment. This bill allows school districts to use transportation levies to create infrastructure or purchase electric buses if they wish. This aligns with the Governor's and the Department of Ecology's goals regarding mandatory carbon emission limits. Currently transportation contributes 45 percent of greenhouse gas and 22 percent of air pollution. The Department of Ecology has grant programs to help districts buy buses, and this would help ensure the correct infrastructure exists.

OTHER: Expanding uses without increasing funding could put a strain on school districts. Grant funding should be increased for purposes of installing these charging stations.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Tana Senn, Prime Sponsor; Joel Creswell, Washington Department of Ecology.

OTHER: Rick Chisa, Public School Employees of Washington (PSE).

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