
Transportation Committee

HB 1980

Brief Description: Allowing certain private employer transportation services to use certain public transportation facilities.

Sponsors: Representatives Zahn, Salahuddin, Parshley, Springer, Timmons, Street, Berg, Leavitt, Thai and Low.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows counties with a population greater than two million people to authorize private employer transportation services to use designated transit-only lanes if the county has established a process for applying to do so.

Hearing Date: 2/24/25

Staff: Jennifer Harris (786-7143).

Background:

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and local authorities are authorized to designate any portion of a roadway under their respective jurisdictions for the exclusive or preferential use of:

- public transportation vehicles;
- motorcycles;
- private motor vehicles carrying a specified minimum number of passengers; and
- certain categories of private transportation provider vehicles if the vehicle has a carrying capacity of at least eight passengers and such use does not interfere with the efficiency, reliability, and safety of public transportation operations.

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.

The following private transportation provider vehicles may qualify for exclusive or preferential use of these roadways:

- private employer transportation service vehicles, when such limitation will increase the efficient utilization of the highway facility or will aid in the conservation of energy resources;
- auto transportation company vehicles;
- passenger charter carrier vehicles, except stretch limousines and stretch sport utility vehicles; and
- private nonprofit transportation provider vehicles.

Regulations authorizing preferential use of a highway facility may be in effect at all times, at specified times of day, or on specified days.

Transit-only lanes that allow other vehicles to access abutting businesses may not be authorized for the use of private transportation provider vehicles. Local authorities are encouraged to establish a process for private transportation providers to apply for the use of limited access facilities that are reserved for the exclusive or preferential use of public transportation vehicles.

"Private employer transportation service" is defined as a regularly scheduled, fixed-route transportation service that is similarly marked or identified to display the business name or logo on the driver and passenger sides of the vehicle, meets the annual certification requirements of the WSDOT, and is offered by an employer for the benefit of its employees.

Summary of Bill:

Counties with a population greater than two million people may authorize private employer transportation services to use designated transit-only lanes if the county has established a process for applying to do so.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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