Washington State
House of Representatives
Office of Program Research

BILL ANALYSIS

Transportation Committee

SB 6148

Brief Description: Modifying the maximum terms of regional transit authority bond issues.

Sponsors: Senators Liias and King.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the maximum term for bonds issued by a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) from 40 years to 75 years.
- Removes the eligibility of an RTA for regional mobility grant program funds, if the RTA issues bonds with a maximum term greater than 40 years.

Hearing Date: 2/19/26

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

Regional Transit Authority.
A Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is a special purpose district that can be established in certain larger population counties, and is authorized to levy and collect taxes within its boundaries to plan, construct, and operate high-capacity transportation, such as express bus services and light rail.

An RTA may issue general obligation bonds and revenue bonds, in order to finance the construction of its facilities, and may incur debt of up to 1.5 percent of the value of the taxable property within the RTA's boundaries. With the approval of at least 60 percent of the voters, an RTA may incur debt of up to five percent of the value of the taxable property within the RTA's boundaries. The maximum term of any RTA bond issuance is 40 years.

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.

There is currently one RTA, Sound Transit, which operates light rail, commuter rail, and express bus service in parts of King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties, and imposes the following voter-approved taxes:

- a sales and use tax of 1.4 percent;
- an annual 1.1 percent motor vehicle excise tax;
- an annual $0.25 per $1,000 of assessed value property tax; and
- a rental car sales tax of 0.8 percent.

Summary of Bill:

The maximum term for bonds issued by an RTA is extended from 40 years to 75 years. The eligibility of an RTA for Regional Mobility Grant Program funds is removed, if the RTA issues bonds with a maximum term greater than 40 years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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