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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6253**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2026 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Krishnadasan, Conway, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Liias, Lovelett, Nobles, Saldaña, Stanford, Valdez, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 02/06/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to public transportation benefit area governing  
2 bodies; amending RCW 36.57A.050; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature believes that governing  
5 bodies of public transportation benefit areas should reflect the  
6 communities that they serve. The legislature finds that these  
7 governing bodies have included a nonvoting labor representative since  
8 2010, and that these representatives have made valuable contributions  
9 to the governing bodies. Therefore, in order to recognize the value  
10 of the labor representative's input and to ensure that public  
11 transportation benefit areas work for and represent the communities  
12 they serve, it is the intent of the legislature to ensure the labor  
13 representative on public transportation benefit area governing bodies  
14 is provided full participation in the debate and discussions  
15 regarding, but not limited to, service plan development, operations,  
16 fiscal planning, and boundary and service management.

17 **Sec. 2.** RCW 36.57A.050 and 2025 c 230 s 1 are each amended to  
18 read as follows:

19 (1)(a) Within 60 days of the establishment of the boundaries of  
20 the public transportation benefit area the members of the county

1 legislative authority and the elected representative of each city  
2 within the area shall provide for the selection of the governing body  
3 of such area, the public transportation benefit area authority, which  
4 shall consist of elected officials selected by and serving at the  
5 pleasure of the governing bodies of component cities within the area  
6 and the county legislative authority of each county within the area.  
7 Two other transit-using members may be appointed to the governing  
8 body of such area, pursuant to subsection (3) (b) of this section.

9 (b) The elected official members of the governing body of the  
10 public transportation benefit area, if the population of the county  
11 in which the public transportation benefit area is located is more  
12 than 400,000 and the county does not also contain a city with a  
13 population of 75,000 or more operating a transit system pursuant to  
14 chapter 35.95 RCW, must be selected to assure proportional  
15 representation, based on population, of each of the component cities  
16 located within the public transportation benefit area and the  
17 unincorporated areas of the county located within the public  
18 transportation benefit area, to the extent possible within the  
19 restrictions placed on the size of the governing body of a public  
20 transportation benefit area. If necessary to assure such proportional  
21 representation, multiple cities may be represented by a single  
22 elected official from one of the cities. A majority of the governing  
23 board may not be selected to represent a single component city.

24 (c) If at the time a public transportation benefit area authority  
25 assumes the public transportation functions previously provided under  
26 the interlocal cooperation act (chapter 39.34 RCW) there are citizen  
27 positions on the governing board of the transit system, those  
28 positions may be retained as positions on the governing board of the  
29 public transportation benefit area authority.

30 (2) Within such 60-day period, any city may by resolution of its  
31 legislative body withdraw from participation in the public  
32 transportation benefit area. The county legislative authority and  
33 each city remaining in the public transportation benefit area may  
34 disapprove and prevent the establishment of any governing body of a  
35 public transportation benefit area if the composition thereof does  
36 not meet its approval.

37 (3) (a) In no case shall the governing body of a single county  
38 public transportation benefit area be greater than 11 voting members  
39 and in the case of a multicounty area, 17 voting members. Those  
40 cities within the public transportation benefit area and excluded

1 from direct membership on the authority are hereby authorized to  
2 designate a member of the authority who shall be entitled to  
3 represent the interests of such city which is excluded from direct  
4 membership on the authority. The legislative body of such city shall  
5 notify the authority as to the determination of its authorized  
6 representative on the authority.

7 (b) (i) In addition to the maximum of nine elected official voting  
8 members of the governing body of a single county public  
9 transportation benefit area or 15 elected official voting members of  
10 the governing body, in the case of a multicounty area, there may be  
11 two transit-using voting members appointed to each governing body by  
12 the elected official voting members. Transit-using voting members may  
13 not be employees of the transit agency operating under the public  
14 transportation benefit area authority.

15 (ii) One transit-using voting member must primarily rely on  
16 public transportation systems for transportation.

17 (iii) One transit-using voting member must represent a community-  
18 based organization and at least occasionally use public  
19 transportation systems for transportation. If no such representative  
20 in the public transportation benefit area's service area is available  
21 to serve, the governing body must appoint a second transit-using  
22 voting member who meets the requirements of (b)(ii) of this  
23 subsection.

24 (iv) If transit-using voting members are appointed to a governing  
25 body, meetings of the governing body must occur at a time and a place  
26 that are reasonably accessible by transit, in order to facilitate the  
27 participation of the transit-using voting members.

28 (v) Transit-using voting members must be provided comprehensive  
29 training regarding the open public meetings act established in  
30 chapter 42.30 RCW, the public records act established in chapter  
31 42.56 RCW, and chapter 42.23 RCW regarding ethics for municipal  
32 officers, as soon as is reasonably practicable after the member's  
33 appointment.

34 (vi) This subsection (3)(b) does not apply to any public  
35 transportation benefit area authority where there are retained  
36 citizen positions on the governing body, pursuant to subsection  
37 (1)(c) of this section.

38 (c) There is one nonvoting member of the public transportation  
39 benefit area authority. The nonvoting member shall be considered a  
40 fully participating member of all authority meetings, and shall be

1 provided with an opportunity to participate in any authority meeting  
2 discussions and debate on any agenda item, including items in which  
3 the authority is taking action. The nonvoting member is recommended  
4 by the labor organization representing the public transportation  
5 employees within the local public transportation system. If the  
6 public transportation employees are represented by more than one  
7 labor organization, all such labor organizations shall select the  
8 nonvoting member by majority vote. The nonvoting member shall comply  
9 with all governing bylaws and policies of the authority. The  
10 nonvoting member may attend executive sessions, except that the chair  
11 or cochairs of the authority shall exclude the nonvoting member from  
12 attending any executive session held for the purpose of discussing  
13 negotiations with labor organizations, issues between the employer  
14 and employees, arbitration, and chief executive officer reviews.  
15 ~~((The chair or cochairs may exclude the nonvoting member from~~  
16 ~~attending any other executive session.)) The requirement that a  
17 nonvoting member be appointed to the governing body of a public  
18 transportation benefit area authority does not apply to an authority  
19 that has no employees represented by a labor union.~~

20 (4) (a) Each member of the authority is eligible to be reimbursed  
21 for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060  
22 and to receive compensation, as set by the authority, in an amount  
23 not to exceed \$44 for each day during which the member attends  
24 official meetings of the authority or performs prescribed duties  
25 approved by the chair of the authority. Except that the authority  
26 may, by resolution, increase the payment of per diem compensation to  
27 each member from \$44 up to \$90 per day or portion of a day for actual  
28 attendance at board meetings or for performance of other official  
29 services or duties on behalf of the authority. In no event may a  
30 member be compensated in any year for more than 75 days, except the  
31 chair who may be paid compensation for not more than 100 days:  
32 PROVIDED, That compensation shall not be paid to an elected official  
33 or employee of federal, state, or local government who is receiving  
34 regular full-time compensation from such government for attending  
35 meetings and performing prescribed duties of the authority.

36 (b) The dollar thresholds established in this section must be  
37 adjusted for inflation by the office of financial management every  
38 five years, beginning January 1, 2024, based upon changes in the  
39 consumer price index during that time period. "Consumer price index"  
40 means, for any calendar year, that year's annual average consumer

1 price index, for Washington state, for wage earners and clerical  
2 workers, all items, compiled by the bureau of labor and statistics,  
3 United States department of labor. If the bureau of labor and  
4 statistics develops more than one consumer price index for areas  
5 within the state, the index covering the greatest number of people,  
6 covering areas exclusively within the boundaries of the state, and  
7 including all items shall be used for the adjustments for inflation  
8 in this section. The office of financial management must calculate  
9 the new dollar threshold and transmit it to the office of the code  
10 reviser for publication in the Washington State Register at least one  
11 month before the new dollar threshold is to take effect.

12 (c) A person holding office as commissioner for two or more  
13 special purpose districts shall receive only that per diem  
14 compensation authorized for one of his or her commissioner positions  
15 as compensation for attending an official meeting or conducting  
16 official services or duties while representing more than one of his  
17 or her districts. However, such commissioner may receive additional  
18 per diem compensation if approved by resolution of all boards of the  
19 affected commissions.

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