

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6672

As of February 4, 2004

Title: An act relating to high-occupancy toll lanes.

Brief Description: Authorizing a pilot project for high-occupancy toll lanes.

Sponsors: Senators Johnson, Prentice, Swecker, Haugen, Keiser, Benton and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Highways & Transportation: 2/4/04.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Janice Baumgardt (786-7319)

Background: High-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes are highway lanes reserved part-time or full-time for transit vehicles, motorcycles, or passenger vehicles carrying a minimum number of occupants. High-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes are lanes that are open to carpools, vanpools, transit vehicles, and toll-paying single occupant vehicles. There are currently over 200 miles of HOV lanes in operation in the central Puget Sound area. There are currently no HOT lanes in Washington State.

Summary of Bill: The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) must establish and operate a HOT lane pilot project on the existing high-occupancy vehicle lanes on State Route 167. Tolls are to be established by the Transportation Commission and may vary in amount by time of day, level of traffic congestion, vehicle occupancy, or other criteria. WSDOT must report annually to the Transportation Commission and the Legislature on the project, including its operational efficiency, effectiveness for transit, revenue usefulness, and impacts on all highway users. Authorization to impose tolls expires if no contracts to begin construction have been entered into by WSDOT within four years, or four years after toll collection begins.

Collected toll revenue is deposited into a newly created high-occupancy toll lane operations account. Violation of HOT lane restrictions is a traffic infraction. Personally identifying information of persons using transponders to facilitate payment of tolls is exempt from public disclosure, and is accessible only to law enforcement personnel for toll enforcement purposes or pursuant to a court order.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.