

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6088

As of February 25, 2009

Title: An act relating to commute trip reduction for state agencies.

Brief Description: Addressing commute trip reduction for state agencies.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Swecker, Haugen, Eide, Marr, Sheldon, Berkey, Benton and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/24/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Wendy Malkin (786-7434)

Background: The goals of the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) law are to reduce air pollution, traffic congestion, and fuel consumption through employer-based programs that decrease the number of employees traveling by single-occupant vehicles to the workplace.

Each county containing an urban growth area (UGA), and each city within an UGA with a state highway segment exceeding the 100 person hours-of-delay threshold, as well as those counties and cities located in any contiguous UGA, are required to adopt a CTR plan and ordinance for major employers in the affected UGA. Person hours-of-delay means the daily person hours-of-delay per mile in the peak period of 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Each major employer in a jurisdiction that adopts a CTR plan must develop and implement a CTR program. Major employer means a private or public employer, including a state agency, that has 100 or more full-time employees at a single worksite who begin their regular workday between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m.

The Legislature intends the state to take a leadership role in effective CTR programs through the adoption of aggressive, substantive CTR programs by state agencies. The General Administration (GA) coordinates an interagency board (Board) to develop policies and guidelines regarding CTR strategies that can be applied to all state agencies. GA reviews the program of each state agency to determine if the program meets the policies and guidelines developed by the Board. GA also reviews each agency's internal report on the performance of its program, and submits a biennial report for state agencies that is submitted to the Governor. The report is also incorporated into the CTR Board's report to the Legislature.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

State agencies sharing a common location in CTR affected urban areas where the total number of state employees is 100 or more are required to develop and implement a joint commute trip reduction program. Common location is interpreted to mean a common building. The GA must assist these agencies in creating the joint program.

Summary of Bill: The responsibilities that are currently with GA regarding coordination of state agency CTR programs are moved to the Department of Transportation (DOT). DOT must coordinate with the Interagency Board and review individual agency programs for consistency with the policies and guidelines developed by the Board. DOT must review each agency's internal performance reports and submit a biennial report for state agencies to the Governor. It must also provide the biennial report for incorporation into the CTR Board's report to the Legislature.

State agencies located in the Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater urban growth areas must develop and implement one joint commute trip reduction program for all agencies located in the three urban growth areas. DOT must assist in the development of the joint program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 23, 2009.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Currently, CTR programs for state agencies in the capitol area are done on a building by building basis. We need a structure for CTR planning that takes an area-wide approach. Employees who commute from the north and people who come from the north for session are forced to drive because there are really no viable alternatives. Requiring all agencies in the capitol area to take an area approach might help address this problem. State employee commutes have a huge impact on traffic in the Olympia area. This bill is based on recommendations from a capitol campus study which indicated that we need to create leadership and consistency in regard to state agency commute trip reduction programs. We need to make sure the relevant parties are at the discussion table no matter which agency is the lead.

Some suggestions to improve the bill are to include all state agencies, including higher education; streamline reporting for small agencies; provide guidance on what the shared program contains; allow for consideration in resources/transit available at different worksites; and consider how to transfer funds from GA to DOT to support the program. Because the CTR program is primarily housed within DOT, putting coordination of the state agency piece in DOT will increase efficiencies and raise the profile of the work. A menu of options for state agencies in three urban growth areas might make more sense than requiring one program. Language should be added to make siting of state facilities a component of the CTR program. Thought should be given to whether DOT or the Interagency CTR Board should be the agency to coordinate among all agencies in the three urban growth areas.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Karen Parkhurst, Pete Kmet, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Joan Cullen, GA; Katy Taylor, WSDOT.