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SENATE BILL 6509

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State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senator Baumgartner

Read first time 01/22/16. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to contingency planning for the state route  
2 number 99 Alaskan Way viaduct replacement project; adding a new  
3 section to chapter 47.01 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the state route  
6 number 99 Alaskan Way viaduct replacement project continues to  
7 experience significant setbacks and delays despite the expenditure of  
8 over two billion dollars. The legislature finds that the drill  
9 project just completed a two-year delay during which the contractor,  
10 Seattle tunnel partners (STP), dug a massive "rescue pit" in downtown  
11 Seattle, hauled out the front end of the drill, and completed  
12 repairs. The drill resumed operation shortly after Christmas and  
13 drilled about seventy-nine feet.

14 The legislature finds that Tuesday, January 12, 2016, was a  
15 particularly bad day in the history of a project plagued with  
16 problems. On that day, STP's barge-filling operation resulted in a  
17 barge listing beyond STP's control. As a result, the barge either was  
18 let go or broke free from the pier, spilling tunnel spoils into  
19 Elliott Bay, and drifted out of control damaging both Terminal 46 and  
20 Pier 48. These events created an unpermitted spill of material and  
21 posed a hazard to project personnel and the public.

1 Later that evening, a sinkhole was detected over the tunnel.  
2 Recent media reports indicate that STP poured two hundred fifty cubic  
3 yards of concrete and sand to fill the thirty-five-foot long, twenty-  
4 foot wide, and fifteen-foot deep sinkhole that developed, but the  
5 hole is continuing to sink. As a result, Governor Jay Inslee, the  
6 chief executive state official responsible for the success or failure  
7 of the project, on January 14, 2016, ordered a halt to the project.  
8 Many citizens worry that if STP continues to dig too much soil as  
9 "Bertha" proceeds north, the viaduct and downtown buildings could be  
10 threatened.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 47.01  
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 To protect the public interest to the fullest extent possible,  
14 the department may not tear down the state route number 99 Alaskan  
15 Way viaduct structure.

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