



February 15, 2012

AWB Legislative Report: Transportation

Legislature Faces Major Cut-off for bills

February 14 marks the cut-off point for bills to pass their house of origin. Some bills will die and others will test their fate in the opposite houses. Transportation issues before the 2012 Legislature have largely addressed updating fees, providing local government revenue options and preparing for the next statewide investment package. We expect ongoing collaboration between the House and Senate and will report on progress during the second half of the legislative session.

House to unveil transportation budget

The House will unveil its supplemental transportation budget, HB 2190 and have a public hearing on February 16. While Senate and House Transportation Committee Chairs appear to have given up on pushing a statewide transportation financing package they expect to include planning for statewide investment in the supplemental transportation budget. AWB will share more with you on the proposal upon its release.

House and Senate pass variety of transportation fee increases

Lawmakers have continued where they left off last year (HB 2053) on a variety of fee increases. This includes driver licenses (SB 5246), commercial driver licenses (HB 2234), electric vehicle license fees (SB 5251) and driving abstract records (SB 5246). Other increases include vehicle document services (HB 2257) and alternative traction devices, also known as studded tires (HB 2355 and SB 6112). AWB has expressed opposition to the studded tire increase and overall concern of the “pile-on” effect of multiple increases. Fee increases for driver licenses provide additional length in time and AWB supports this measure. SB 6455 sponsored by Sen. Haugen is another local option transportation bill that passed the Senate 31-18 and imposes a variety of local fees. The proposed effective date is October, 2012 for fees relating to:

- Abstract Drivers Record from \$10.00 to \$15.00
- Title Application from \$5.00 to \$12.50
- Original License Plates from \$0 to 10.00
- Original Motorcycle plates from \$0 to \$4.00
- Motorcycle replacement plates from \$2.00 to \$4.00
- Vehicle Dealer Original License from \$750.00 to \$975.00
- Vehicle Dealer License Renewal from 250.00 325.00
- Vehicle Dealer Document Service permanently established at \$150.00\

Lawmakers look for local government transportation financing options

The Senate passed SB 6582 sponsored by Sen. Haugen that will give counties more power to raise local gas taxes or vehicle fees and taxes. Specifically, they could choose to enact a 1 percent motor vehicle excise tax, a \$40 annual car-tab fee or a local gas tax up to 3 cents per gallon. In its original form, the bill allowed cities a 1 cent gas tax option per gallon. This language was stripped from the bill after Sen. Hill offered an amendment (S AMD 116) to remove the city option but retains the county gas tax option with a vote of the people. The bill now goes to the House Transportation committee for further consideration. AWB opposed the local gas tax option when

testifying in committee and while we support the amendment by Sen. Hill, there remains a concern that making it easier for counties to raise gas taxes will make it harder to pass a statewide gas tax in the future. The bill remains controversial and narrowly passed 25-24. Other bills, HB 2660 and House Joint Resolution 4228, are currently dead after attempting to clarify that local gas taxes are protected under the 18th amendment to ensure the revenues are used for road purposes. AWB will continue to review these increases collectively with other proposals to limit fee pile-on and ensure appropriate uses of the collected revenue.

Eligible toll facilities move to House

Two bills establishing toll facilities in Washington passed the Senate. SB 6444 authorizes variable tolling for the deep bore tunnel for the Alaskan Way Viaduct. Rates are established by the Washington State Transportation Commission to pay bonds on the project. This measure passed easily with a vote of 42-5 while the Columbia River Crossing project met more controversy with a vote of 33-15. Sen. Zarelli offered an amendment to set a limit on the cost of the project of \$3.413 billion dollars. Sen. King successfully passed an amendment to forbid any tolls on any portion of Interstate 205. The underlying measure sponsored by Sen. Pridemore at the request of the Department of Transportation ensures any agreement between Oregon is not binding until 30 days after the next regular session. Both of these bills now go to the House Transportation Committee.

Heavy haul corridor legislation passes House

HB 2476 sponsored by Rep. Jinkins will allow WSDOT to extend the heavy-haul corridor on State Route 509 by 1.82 miles upon agreement with the Port of Tacoma. The bill allows businesses on State Route 509 to take advantage of the heavy-haul corridor and increases freight mobility. AWB supports HB 2476 that passed the House 97-0 and awaits further action in the Senate Transportation Committee.

Truck vehicle maximum length passes Senate for U.S. consistency

SB 6138 increases the maximum length of a straight truck that a person can operate in the state of Washington from 40 feet to 46 feet. This will make Washington consistent with other states and the allowed length of RV's on our highways. It will also prevent employers from having two vehicles to accommodate the needs that one vehicle can. AWB supports this common sense bill sponsored by Sen. Erickesn. The measure passed the Senate unanimously and is referred to the House Transportation Committee.

Additional transportation bills survive cut-off

With any cut-off bills pass or die however with transportation related measures, items can easily become alive in the budget process. In addition to the bills mentioned in this report, the following bills are technically "alive" after the cut-off for bills to pass their house of origin:

<u>BILL#</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>STATUS</u>			
1217	Speed limits	S, Transportation	2545	Local government fuel usage	S,Energy/NatRes/M
1518	Transit and parking benefits	S, GovtOp & Elect	2553	Publ. trans governing bodies	S, Transportation
1700	Transportation projects	S, Transportation	2601	Transit service overlay zone	S, Transportation
1833	Motorcycle safety ed board	S, Transportation	2673	Transportation workforce	H, Passed 3rd
2238	Job order contracting	H passed (Support)	2725	Council on coordinated trans	S, Transportation
2240	Public improve contracts	H, Passed 3rd	2736	Commercial vehicles	S Transportation
2252	Transportation fare payment	S, Transportation	5188	Traffic control signals	H, Trans
2270	Traffic safety camera signs	S, Transportation	5676	Projects of statewide signif	S, 3rd Reading
2274	Tow truck operators' costs	S, Transportation	5730	Usage-based auto insurance	H, Bus & Fin Svcs
2280	Motor vehicles/yellow dot	S Transportation	6075	Vehicle owner information	S, Passed 3rd
2361	Usage-based auto insurance	S, FI/Hous/Ins	6081	Ferry replacement surcharge	H, Trans
2370	State transportation system	S, Transportation	6150	Facial recognition matching	S, Passed 3rd
2372	Tow truck services	H, Passed 3rd	6215	Low-income individuals	S, 2nd Reading
2384	Personal vehicle sharing	S, FI/Hous/Ins	6340	Flatbed tow truck/passengers	H, Trans
2433	Facial recognition matching	H, 2nd Reading	6350	Trans innovative partnership	H, Trans
2459	Commer. vehicle lic. plates	S Transportation	6423	Farm vehicle	H Trans

For more information please contact AWB's Amber Carter at 1-800-521-9325 or amberc@awb.org. Copies of bills are available at www.leg.wa.gov. Thank you.