



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors

FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director *MR*

DATE: March 1, 2016

SUBJECT: State Legislative Session Update

AT A GLANCE – INFORMATION

The purpose of this memorandum is to keep the RTC Board apprised of proposed state legislation.

BACKGROUND

The Washington State Legislature convened for its 2016 session on January 11 and is scheduled to complete its limited session on March 10. At the outset of the legislative session, RTC staff began tracking bills that would revise laws that govern transportation funding, planning, and RTC operations. In addition to monitoring proposed legislation, staff are also assisting Legislators and RTC Member agency staff (and their lobbyists) by providing current information in regards to RTC plans and recommended projects through the Board endorsed Regional Transportation Plan (2014) and current Clark County Transportation Alliance statement.

CURRENT STATUS

As of this report, RTC staff have been monitoring these bills as summarized below:

Bill #	Summary	Perceived Impact	Status
HB 2414	Would establish a Legislative work group with the express intent of establishing a bi-state process to facilitate planning for replacement of the I-5 bridges over the Columbia River. The bill is presumed to require complimentary legislation in the state of Oregon to create the same such work group.	TBD. Incidental participation may be required as part of stakeholder engagement process.	<i>Dead for this session</i>
SB 6506	Would establish a Legislative task force for rail transportation. This task force would study and make recommendations regarding needed investments in strategic railroad corridors in WA state.	None. Incidental participation may be required as part of stakeholder engagement process.	<i>Dead for this session</i>
HB 2815	Would establish a new Regional Transportation Planning Organization	RTC and other RTPO's across the state receive a portion of state	<i>Passed full House; in</i>

	(RTPO) in Island County.	funds dedicated to RTPO's. Establishment of this RTPO would dilute RTC's share of the RTPO grant funds. The fiscal impact is estimated to be a net loss of less than \$1K per year.	<i>Rules committee in Senate</i>
HB 2923	Redefined the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) responsibilities related to planning for freight and rail related investment projects.	None. Incidental participation may be required as part of stakeholder engagement process with SMSIB.	<i>Dead for this session</i>

Transportation Supplemental Operating Budgets

Both the House and the Senate introduced Supplemental Transportation Budgets, each with unique provisions and programs. Most notable among both bills is the revenue increases for the 2015-2017 biennium. This is due to OFM recognizing and programming new revenues that WA State is set to receive as set in place by the federal FAST Act. Further discussion of the State / Region split of FAST Act formula STP funds is set to take place, beginning spring of this year.

Also notable between both bills is the lack of re-prioritization of the spending / phasing plan for projects authorized by the Connecting Washington program. Several projects in the RTC region have been identified as needing re-phasing. Despite local agency requests, the budget proposals from both chambers do not make any adjustments to the program, which leaves agencies focusing those requests on the YR 2017 session. Further discussion of this topic may be of interest to RTC members and can be planned for future agenda.

NEXT STEPS

RTC staff will continue to monitor proposed bills which are currently or may be introduced during this legislative session. In addition to monitoring, RTC staff will provide information and input to the Board, Legislators, and RTC Member agency staff as requested.