



The Municipal League of King County
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April 9, 2007

Governor Christine Gregoire
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Senator Mary Margaret Haugen
305 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40410
Olympia, WA 98504-0410

Representative Judy Clibborn
435 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

RE: REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION GOVERNANCE LEGISLATION &
THE UNIFIED RTID/SOUND TRANSIT BALLOT;
ESSB 5803 and SHB 1396

Dear Governor Gregoire, Senator Haugen and Representative Clibborn,

The Municipal League of King County has been closely following the recommendations of the Regional Governance Transportation Commission (the "Commission") and the movement of transportation reform legislation in this session of the legislature. Guided by the Commission's findings, the legislature is striving to create a new regional governance transportation authority for Puget Sound. We firmly support the legislature's goal: The creation of a new Regional Transportation Commission ("RTC") vested with broad authority to plan, fund and manage the region's transportation systems, all with a view to improving the coordination between local, county, regional and state agencies. We cannot, however, support ESSB 5803, the bill that passed the Senate. An amended version of the Senate bill, ESSB 5803, is now under consideration by the House.

ESSB 5803 is deficient in at least two areas:

- It fails to carefully address the transition of the gate-keeper role of the Puget Sound Regional Commission ("PSRC"). The PSRC is the federally recognized regional metropolitan planning organization, vested with the exclusive authority to determine the eligibility of Puget Sound transportation projects for federal funds. The PSRC is a creature of local intergovernmental contracts, and its role can be reassigned only with the unanimous consent of the participating municipalities, not by legislative fiat. If not carefully managed, the

merger of the PSRC into the new RTC, as contemplated by ESSB 5803, could cause the loss or interruption of much-needed federal money.

- The bill would make the RTC commissioners highly paid, full-time employees. The League considers this approach unwise. The position of RTC Commissioner should not be a full-time occupation, nor should it receive full-time pay. While the Commissioners certainly should receive fair pay for their services, no one is served by inflating their salaries and job descriptions.

A new RTC is needed, but it can wait until 2008. Meanwhile, we should focus on moving the combined RTID and Sound Transit II funding packages toward the November 2007 election. We believe that the RTC legislation should not distract the legislature or the voters from these vital transportation funding measures.

In that regard, we urge the legislature to devote its attention to adopting SHB 1396, which would authorize one ballot for the joint funding package. The bill passed the House 96 to 1, and is now before the Senate. We believe a single ballot title will present a clear choice to voters. There is no reason to present separate roads and transit measures. Voters already view roads and transit as the two elements of an integrated transportation system.

Sincerely,



Bruce Carter, League Chair



Robert Klein, Vice Chair and Chair, Transportation Committee