



BILL BRIEF

HB 1786 – Supp. Transportation Budget

Key Points

- Provides \$11.7 billion for the 2021-23 transportation budget.
- There is overlap with Move Ahead Washington, but the intent is not to double fund anything.
- This budget indicates an intent to pay for cost over-runs on legislatively approved projects
- Bills and related documents can be found at <http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/detail/2022/ht2022Supp.asp>

Background

The 2021-23 transportation budget is **\$11.7 billion, a reduction of \$137 million**. The reliance on bonding is reduced from \$2.5 billion to \$1.4 billion. The [revenue forecast](#) projects \$6.59 million in state revenues for 2021-23.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has had a difficult time spending its allocated funding for a variety of reasons, including many of the governor's directives in response to COVID-19 (stay at home orders, furloughs, and loss of [hundreds of employees](#) due to the vaccine mandate).

This budget will overlap the [Move Ahead Washington](#) plan (HB 2119) and spending (HB 2118) bills with regard to funding from the Climate Commitment Act and increases on the Connecting Washington projects.

What this legislation does

Republican Ideas

- \$5 million would go toward keeping safety rest areas open, similar to the direction in [HB 1655](#), and \$50,000 to post human trafficking assistance phone number signs at those areas, similar to [HB 2077](#).
- Directs WSDOT to allow commercial truck drivers to park in chain-up areas on US 2 and I-90 during the season when snow is unlikely.
- \$5 million in additional funds would address encampments on WSDOT's right of ways. Of this amount, \$2 million is for increased litter removal, and \$2 million is for right of way clean-up connected to the Puget Sound Gateway project.

Items of Concern

- This spends \$127 million in Climate Commitment Act funding that may not appear at the end of the biennium. This funding is going to special interests instead of much-needed repairs on the state system.

Key messages

Republicans have different priorities including maintenance and preservation, emphasis on local projects, and completing Connecting Washington projects.

Republicans have a different way to pay for needs on the system without creating new fees and taxes.

This budget spends funding from the Climate Commitment Act that may not materialize.

Bill Status as of February 21, 2022, prior to Committee consideration

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For Internal Use Only

- An increase of \$68.8 million for public transportation funding, with a good portion of the funding coming from the Climate Commitment Act, identified in the Move Ahead Washington bills.
- Provides \$4 million and authorization to seek federal funding for the governor's ultra-high-speed rail concept from Portland, Oregon, to Vancouver, BC. An additional \$50 million is available for federal grant matching requirements for the state portion.
- There is a study considering permanently closing freight corridor SR 99 that passes through the South Park neighborhood in King County near Boeing.
- \$500,000 is provided to King County Metro to hire a team of people to de-escalate disruptions on its systems to break cycles of inappropriate behavior.
- A land swap requires changing the law so that WSDOT can sell a surplus property below fair market value to a non-profit organization.
- This bill authorizes the Department of Commerce to set vehicle miles traveled reduction targets for all jurisdictions when the original did not apply in rural counties.

Projects

- Project delays continue as WSDOT changes the phasing of projects, such as SR 520, Puget Sound Gateway, I-90 widening to Easton, SR 14/Bingen Underpass, and fish passage barrier removals.
- There is a revenue shortfall of \$1.3 billion on existing legislatively approved projects, such as SR 520 at \$600 million; Puget Sound Gateway at \$433 million; and I-90 widening to Easton at \$178.8 million. This commits to paying for these cost overruns.
- This biennium assumes sales tax deferral payments on SR 167, I-405 and SR 520 for \$18.3 million.

Washington State Ferries

- Much of the governor's proposal for staffing changes are funded, including purchasing a computer dispatch system and hiring outside recruiters to help with long-time staffing issues. There is an estimated \$13.4 million to address recruitment and retention outside of what was negotiated in the collective bargaining agreements for pay increases.

Washington State Patrol

- This budget redirects unused funding due to vacancies towards newly requested items. It funds pay increases and continued efforts to hire new troopers, including options for lateral hires that are not the same as recruits.

Compensation

- The governor reopened collective bargaining agreements mid-biennium. This adds \$52.6 million for increased compensation. While there might be agreement on many aspects, some atypical benefits are added. There is payment for things that have already happened, such as furloughs and leave taken to get a COVID vaccine.
- This budget spends millions of dollars on recruitment and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Department of Licensing (DOL) fee adjustment

- When someone pays with a credit card at any DOL office, they are responsible for paying the fee charged by credit card companies. This bill authorizes DOL to set the fee to create additional revenue to assist with cost recovery purposes.

Reasons to Support

- This provides funding to keep the transportation system working, with modifications stemming from issues that developed in the last few months.

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- It provides new authority for Washington State Ferries to address staffing concerns.
- There are objectional items, but a bill always has some.
- We were told there is a need for the changes in this bill to keep the mega projects in King County on track.

Reasons to Oppose

- Elements of the Democrats' Move Ahead Washington tax and spend plan are incorporated into the budget.
- This is a supplemental budget, and the transportation system is still funded at \$11.9 billion if this legislation does not pass.
- Republicans have different priorities for new spending than spending Climate Commitment Act dollars for transit, electrification, ferries, and bike and pedestrian projects in the manner proposed.

Additional Sources

Article on closing a portion of SR 99 permanently: <https://www.seattlebikeblog.com/2021/12/30/south-park-community-group-seeks-to-reclaim-neighborhood-land-from-a-harmful-redundant-highway/>

<https://www.washingtonpolicy.org/publications/detail/wsdot-has-spent-over-234-million-in-constitutionally-protected-road-funds-to-pay-for-transit-bike-and-pedestrian-infrastructure>