

Identity Clark County

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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Local Transportation Options

HB 1858, sponsored by Rep. Bill Fromhold had its first hearing in the House this week and it received a good reception. This is the legislation that **provides additional local option transportation revenues for cities and counties through Transportation Benefit Districts (TBD)**. Rep. Fromhold testified on behalf of his bill in what was set up as "local government transportation day" that was devoted to city and county presentations on their local needs. Ginger Metcalf testified on behalf of Identity Clark County and Thayer Rorabaugh testified on behalf of the City of Vancouver. It is anticipated the bill may be passed from Committee this month. The Senate Transportation Committee has not yet announced a hearing date for the bill (SB 5767).

LIFT & Economic Development Legislation – SB 5155/HB 1277; HB 1790/SB 5762

The "Lift" legislation was heard in House Community & Economic Development & Trade and was well received. I reported on the details of that legislation in my last report. **SB 5762 deals with funding of jobs, economic development and local capital projects**. That legislation was heard in the Senate this week. HB 1790 will be heard in the House Monday, the 12th. Both bills are similar. **The legislation provides for grant assistance through the CERB Board along with assistance for acquisition of real property within a local jurisdiction**. Additionally, grants must show the nexus to economic development and be ready to occur. Grants of up to \$50,000 are allowed for plans, studies and analyses related to a project and have some matching funds.

Container Tax (SB 5207)

The container tax is still alive in the Senate for **Freight Rail project funding** however, it is being changed. Instead of the original \$50 per 20-foot container, the rate is being lowered to \$30. The first \$25 will be dedicated to a fund for Freight Rail projects and \$5 to Ports for air emission controls. The bill has a trigger, which makes it effective if the State of California imposes a similar tax. There has been a lot of concern over the container tax and its impact on discretionary cargo at our Ports in competition with California. Sponsors hope this will lesson the impact by a triggering device. **There is significant opposition to the tax from Ports, retail interests, shippers and Agriculture** and the matter is still very much in doubt.

Columbia River Crossing (CRC) Project

On February 16th, a contingent of Washington Transportation Legislators will meet with their Oregon counterparts at ODOT headquarters in Portland around 11:30 am. That time may change. Washington Legislators are planning to come down to Portland via train.

The purpose of the meeting is to have an **open discussion on the process being used to reach decisions on the project** and any other issues related. It is not a public hearing and speakers have been selected to make presentations. The public is invited. Hal Dengerink of WSU and his Oregon co-chair of the CRC Task Force are invited to discuss the process. Larry Paulson will also make a presentation on rail issues and the crossing project.

Senator Haugen, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, has introduced senate Resolution 8405. **That resolution basically takes note of the importance of the project and authorizes legislative participation in the process**. My own view is that this is a good thing in the long run to have legislative participation as the process continues. I think the resolution will be shown to Oregon legislators at the February 16th meeting at ODOT.

In addition, the **Senate Transportation Committee has planned a work session on the Crossing Project**, Tuesday, February 13th at 3:30. A work session means there will be no public testimony. Staff will provide the Committee with an **over view of the project** before they travel to Portland on the 16th to meet with their Oregon counterparts. We can thank Chairwoman Haugen for her interest in this project and these recent planned events.