

**SOUND TRANSIT
STAFF REPORT**

MOTION NO. M2005-121

2006 State Legislative Program

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Board	12/08/05	Discussion/Possible Action	Ric Ilgenfritz, Chief of Corporate and Strategic Communications Melanie Newman, State Government Relations Specialist	(206) 398-5239 (206) 398-5318

PROJECT NAME

2006 State Legislative Program

PROPOSED ACTION

Adopting the Sound Transit 2006 State Legislative Program and directing staff to continue to evaluate issues for impact to the agency as it continues to successfully implement the regional transportation system.

KEY FEATURES of PROPOSED ACTION

This action would authorize Sound Transit staff and consultants in Olympia to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session:

- Support the State's new role in public transportation

The Legislature adopted legislation in 2005 to increase the State's role in public transportation and created the Office of Transit Mobility. The Office's new grant program aims to aid local governments in funding projects such as inter-county connectivity service, park and ride lots, rush hour transit service, and capital projects. Sound Transit supports the State's efforts to promote public transit and improve the connectivity and efficiency of the transportation system and is submitting proposals for consideration.

- Clarify legislation that allows Sound Transit to benefit from state special fuel tax incentives.

Sound Transit is committed to the protection of the environment for present and future generations as we provide high capacity transit to the Puget Sound region. In an effort to avoid environmental degradation, Sound Transit's fleet includes hybrid buses and natural gas buses. State law currently encourages use of alternative fuels by exempting all urban transportation systems from payment of special fuel taxes except for trips exceeding twenty-five road miles beyond the corporate limits of the county in which said trip originated. A Washington Department of Revenue audit of one of Sound Transit's partner agencies determined fuel used for ST Express routes is potentially subject to state special fuel taxes, with a projected cost to the agency of more than \$90,000 per year. Legislation is needed to extend the exemption to Sound Transit's regional bus routes.

- Support a balanced statewide and regional transportation investment strategy package that addresses critical transportation infrastructure needs.

During 2005, Sound Transit supported a balanced statewide package of transportation improvements. The Sound Transit Board continues to express support for a balanced approach to transportation funding, project planning and implementation and is considering a joint ballot with the Regional Transportation Investment District.

- Support legislative efforts of Sound Transit's partner agencies that would facilitate the cost effective delivery of transit projects and services.

Sound Transit has historically supported the legislative efforts of our partners that facilitate the cost-effective delivery of transit projects and services.

- Oppose legislation which amends Sound Transit enabling statutes without the consent and advice of the Sound Transit Board of Directors, and oppose legislation that would increase the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impair the agency's ability to deliver its voter-approved regional transportation program.

Having served more than 45 million riders in seven years of service, and with many capital projects built or under construction, the Sound Transit Board will continue to oppose legislation that would change the agency's enabling statutes, or increase the cost of delivering Sound Transit's regional projects and services.

- Monitor coordination legislation that might affect Sound Transit projects.

Based on on-going discussions at the regional and state levels, it is possible legislation could be introduced directing coordination of transit agencies in the Central Puget Sound Region. Sound Transit welcomes greater coordination among systems and service providers and will monitor proposed legislation to ensure there are no negative impacts to the agency's ability to continue to deliver its regional projects and services.

BUDGET IMPACT SUMMARY

There is no action outside of the Board-adopted budget; there are no contingency funds required, no subarea impacts, or funding required from other parties other than what is already assumed in the financial plan.

BUDGET and FINANCIAL PLAN DISCUSSION

Adoption of the State Legislative Program does not create a budget or financial impact to the agency or any of its programs. Advocacy of the State Legislative Program is fully funded through the Communications Department Budget.

M/W/DBE – Small Business Participation

Not applicable to this action.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND for PROPOSED ACTION

Annually, the Sound Transit Board adopts a State Legislative Program. The program has typically included issues and policy guidance to staff and contract lobbyists to assist them in representing the agency's interests during the legislative session.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY

Sound Transit's interests are better served at the State Legislature if the Board of Directors adopts a State Legislative Program for the legislative session. Delaying adoption until the start of the session could minimize effective advocacy.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Not applicable to this action.

LEGAL REVIEW

JW 11/04/2005

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A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the Sound Transit 2006 State Legislative Program and directing staff to continue to evaluate issues for impact to the agency as it continues to successfully implement the regional transportation system.

Background:

Annually, the Sound Transit Board adopts a State Legislative Program. The program has typically included issues and policy guidance to staff and contract lobbyists to assist them in representing the agency's interests during the legislative session. This action would authorize Sound Transit staff and consultants in Olympia to advocate and/or pursue the following positions during the 2006 state legislative session:

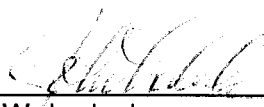
- Support the State's new role in public transportation.
- Clarify legislation that allows Sound Transit to benefit from state special fuel tax incentives.
- Support a balanced statewide and regional transportation investment strategy package that addresses critical transportation infrastructure needs.
- Support legislative efforts of Sound Transit's partner agencies that would facilitate the cost effective delivery of transit projects and services.
- Oppose legislation which amends Sound Transit enabling statutes without the consent and advice of the Sound Transit Board of Directors, and oppose legislation that would increase the costs of transit improvements and services or otherwise impair the agency's ability to deliver its voter-approved regional transportation program.
- Monitor coordination legislation that might affect Sound Transit projects.

Motion:


It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the 2006 State Legislative Program and directing staff to continue to evaluate issues for impact to the agency as it continues to successfully implement the regional transportation system.

ADOPTED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on December 8, 2005.

ATTEST:



John W. Ladenburg
Board Chair



Marcia Walker
Board Administrator