

Massive Transportation Revenue Package Proposed

The House Transportation Democratic Caucus unveiled a massive \$26 billion, 16-year revenue package last week. This ambitious plan invests significant revenues into transportation preservation and maintenance projects, as well as carbon reduction initiatives. Specific details of the proposal are forthcoming, so unfortunately, there are a number of questions that remain unanswered.

For counties, investments are considerable – more than we have seen in decades. The plan allocates \$582 million to CRAB programs, although details on the disbursement of those dollars have not been disclosed. The package also allocates over \$800 million to the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), and an additional \$59 million to TIB's Complete Streets program. At this time there are no direct distributions via gas tax.

In addition, the plan invests in ambitious carbon reduction programs and strategies. This includes investments into transportation electrification, transit, pedestrian and bicycle programs, Safe Route to Schools, and our ferry fleets. Counties would presumably be eligible for many of these competitive grant programs.

The \$26 billion in revenue is raised through two primary mechanisms, an 18-cent gas tax increase over a two-year period, and carbon fee over three-biennia. The proposal also levies a 3-cent diesel tax, and numerous vehicle and weight fees.

The introduction of this proposal is just the first in a long series of conversations and negotiations to come. The Senate is expected release its own transportation revenue package in the coming days or weeks.

For a complete summary of the House proposal [see here](#). You can also watch a press conference on the [plan here](#). As more details are unveiled about this proposal, and when a formal bill is introduced, I will provide further information and specifics.

Week 3 outlook

As we begin week three, transportation will begin holding public hearings on bills. The past two weeks have been primarily dedicated to agency and stakeholder introductions, as well as a hearing on the [Governor's proposed budget](#).

At this juncture there are very few bills that have been referred to transportation, which is unusual. In the lead up to the session, legislative leadership had asked lawmakers to limit the number of bills they were planning to introduce. It appears in the transportation arena they listened. However, there are a couple of bills that are worth noting:

[HB 1030, Rep Tom Dent \(R-Moses Lake\)](#): Relating to a community aviation revitalization loan program. HB 1030 tasks WSDOT with forming a community aviation revitalization board, consisting of county representation, to make direct loans to airport sponsors of public use airports in the state for the purpose of airport improvements. This bill is contingent on funding. HB 1030 is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Transportation Committee, Monday, January 25, at 3:30pm. WSACE supports this bill.

[HB 1137](#), Rep. Bob McCaslin (R-Spokane Valley): Elevating road maintenance and preservation in transportation planning. HB 1137 reorders the state's six transportation policy goals to prioritize health and safety and preservation and maintenance as the state's foremost priorities when it comes to transportation investments. The other four goals include economic vitality, mobility, environment, and stewardship.

WSACE is very supportive of this bill as it aligns with the WSACE legislative priority of prioritizing preservation and maintenance funding above all else. HB 1137 is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Transportation Committee, Monday, January 25, at 3:30pm.