

**SOUND TRANSIT
STAFF REPORT**

MOTION NO. M2008-116

2009 State Legislative Program

Meeting:	Date:	Type of Action:	Staff Contact:	Phone:
Executive Committee	12/4/08	Discussion/Possible Action to Recommend Board Approval	Ric Ilgenfritz, Executive Director, Policy, Planning and Public Affairs	(206) 398-5239
Board	12/11/08	Action	Melanie Smith, State Government Relations Specialist	(206) 255-9678

PROJECT NAME

2009 State Legislative Program

PROPOSED ACTION

Adopting the Sound Transit 2009 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 a balanced statewide and regional transportation investment strategy that addresses critical transportation infrastructure needs and the State's role in public transportation.**

The Sound Transit Board continues to express support for a balanced approach to transportation funding, project planning and implementation. Sound Transit supports the allocation and timing of state appropriations for projects in a manner that ensures coordinated and timely delivery of projects and services.

Sound Transit supports the State's efforts to promote public transit and improve the connectivity and efficiency of the transportation system through the Office of Transit Mobility (OTM). The Office's 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 and project partners received more than \$14 million in grant funding for Sound Move projects from OTM for the 2007-2009 budget cycle and will be submitting proposals for consideration for the next biennium. Sound Transit supports maintaining the Regional Mobility Grant program as a competitive funding source to assist transit and local governments with capital and operating projects that improve regional mobility.

- **Support and partner with Sound Transit's state, local and transit partner agencies to 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.

- **Monitor governance and other proposals that would have a negative impact on the agency's ability to continue to deliver its regional projects and services.**

Sound Transit encourages greater coordination between service providers and transportation entities, including between transit agencies and the Washington State Department of Transportation. We will oppose proposed legislation that might negatively alter the oversight, financing, construction, delivery and operation of Sound Transit projects.

- **Clarify legislation that allows Sound Transit and other transit agencies 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 revisions to update the bus conduct code.**

The Washington State Transit Association's Security Council has identified improvements to the Bus Conduct Code that will update the language and provide further clarification for transit and law enforcement agencies. Sound Transit supports their efforts to ensure the safety of transit riders.

- **Support efforts to provide timely matching funds by the State for the completion of the I-90 Two Way Transit and HOV project.**

Recognizing the importance of mobility across Lake Washington, Sound Transit continues its commitment to work with the State of Washington and regional stakeholders to ensure timely completion of the I-90 Two Way Transit and HOV project (R8A). Completion of R8A is necessary to increase throughput in the corridor and sets the stage for adding light rail to the center road way as approved by voters in 2008.

- **Support legislative proposals promoting development that will result in reduced vehicle miles traveled, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, higher transit ridership, enhanced mobility and sustainability in the communities Sound Transit serves.**

The State's Climate Action Team was charged with developing recommendations for actions that can be taken by the Governor and Legislature to address climate change. Mass transit, and in particular high capacity transit, can help the State achieve its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption and reliance on foreign oil. Policies adopted by the State should recognize the vital role of transit and the opportunities it provides for creating jobs and making our communities more affordable and livable. Sound Transit supports proposals that facilitate future growth and planning that encourage appropriate land uses and densities to reinforce efficient land use and transit connectivity.

- **Oppose legislation which amends Sound Transit's 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 85 million riders in nine 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, increase the cost or delay the delivery of Sound Transit's 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 Policy, Planning and Public Affairs 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.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

SSK 11-25-08

LEGAL REVIEW

SGS 11/25/08

SOUND TRANSIT

MOTION NO. M2008-116

A motion of the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority adopting the Sound Transit 2009 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:

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 a balanced statewide and regional transportation investment strategy that addresses critical transportation infrastructure needs and the State's role in public transportation.**

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- **Support and partner with Sound Transit's state, local and transit partner agencies to facilitate the cost-effective delivery of transit projects and services.**

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- **Monitor governance and other proposals that would have a negative impact on the agency's ability to continue to deliver its regional projects and services.**

Sound Transit encourages greater coordination between service providers and transportation entities, including between transit agencies and the Washington State Department of Transportation. We will oppose proposed legislation that might negatively alter the oversight, financing, construction, delivery and operation of Sound Transit projects.

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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.

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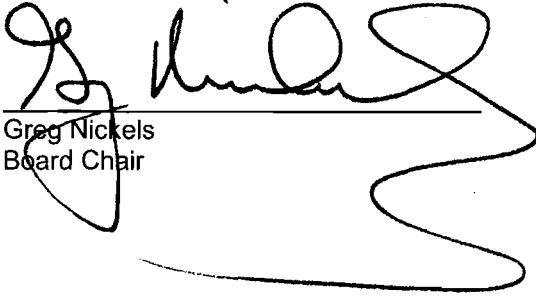
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Motion:

It is hereby moved by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority that the Sound Transit 2009 State Legislative Program is adopted and staff is directed to continue to evaluate issues for impact to the agency as it continues to successfully implement the regional transportation system.

APPROVED by the Board of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority at a regular meeting thereof held on December 11, 2008.



Greg Nickels
Board Chair

ATTEST:

Marcia Walker
Marcia Walker
Board Administrator