

## **[Bipartisan Senate committee unveils 2013-15 transportation budget](#)**

### **Local News**

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - Making good on promises to continue a tradition of cooperation, leaders of the [Washington State Senate Transportation Committee](#) today proposed a bipartisan transportation budget that would spend \$8.7 billion in 2013-15: \$5.3 billion in capital construction spending and \$3.4 billion for operating costs and debt service payments. The proposal would complete the tunnel replacing Seattle's Alaskan Way Viaduct, restore and maintain ferry service levels, and improve or preserve highways across Washington, as well as make a number of system-wide reforms. "We were faced with a particularly challenging set of circumstances this year, but I'm proud that this committee has not only faced those challenges but overcome them," said [Sen. Curtis King](#), R-Yakima, and co-chair of the transportation committee. "We've been able to maintain funding for all the projects to which the state is already committed, and we've even identified a number of areas where we can generate savings by implementing reforms." King added that working with each other instead of against each other has truly made the transportation committee the most bipartisan in the Senate, a sentiment shared by committee co-chair [Sen. Tracey Eide](#), D-Federal Way. "Sen. King and I recognize that transportation is the 'driving force' behind our economy," said Eide. "But given the background of a still uncertain economic recovery, few new items are funded in the proposed Senate Transportation budget. We kept our promises, including a commitment to fix and maintain the existing state transportation system. We will continue to work with our colleagues in the House and Gov. Inslee on future priorities, especially those that relate to the state's reliance on a world-class transportation system that can ensure our state continues to thrive economically," Eide concluded.

Highlights of the Senate's [2013-15 transportation budget](#) proposal include:

- \$4.1 billion for planned highway improvement and preservation construction;
- \$60.5 million for concrete preservation on Interstate 5;
- \$200 million in toll revenues to complete construction of the \$3.1 billion deep-bore tunnel to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct on State Route 99;
- Fully funding the 2003 and 2005 commitments to special needs transportation (\$25 million), rural mobility (\$17 million) and regional mobility (\$40 million) grant programs;
- Maintaining the 2012 commitment to provide \$26 million in transit operating grants;
- Fully funding construction of the state's second 144-car Olympic-class ferry;
- \$22 million for conversion of the ferry "Hyak" to include installation of a power-management system and more efficient engines, with an expected fuel-consumption saving of up to 20 percent;
- \$6 million for snow and ice removal, roadway maintenance and field engineering equipment;
- \$5.3 million for the ongoing costs of 21 new Washington State Patrol troopers hired in 2012; and
- \$16.4 million for payments associated with deployment of the State Patrol's mobile-office platform and narrow-band communication upgrade.

"A rarely acknowledged but equally critical component of our state's transportation system is the professionals who put their lives on the line to patrol this system and keep its users safe," added [Sen. Joe Fain](#), committee vice-chair from Auburn. "Our state patrol has shouldered the bad economy and we must start reinvesting in these dedicated public servants." Revenue for the 2013-15 proposal would come from typically traditional sources, including:

- Motor-vehicle fuel tax collections;
- Licenses, permits and

driver-related fees; Ferry revenue; and Revenue from toll collection.

“This budget focuses on ensuring safe, reliable transportation options for people and freight while continuing to fund our major projects and keep people working,” said [Sen. Steve Hobbs](#), D-Lake Stevens, and fellow committee vice-chair. “These small, public use airports are integral to the overall health of our economy. They play a vital role in tourism, wildfire management and many different aspects of commerce throughout our state.” If approved by the full Senate, the transportation budget proposal would then be considered by the House of Representatives.