



# Policy Brief

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## 1999-2001 Transportation Budget Referendum 49 Impacts

Referendum 49, passed by the voters in November 1998, will generate \$2,232 million from bonds and cash over the next six years for state and local highways. Governor Gary Locke's 1999-2001 Transportation Budget allocates R-49 dollars roughly in these proportions: 77% of the Referendum 49 funds for state highways, 9% for the ferry system, 7% for local highways and 7% for rail capital.

Allocation of Referendum 49 funds will spark controversy during this legislative session. Many jurisdictions want to grab money from this pot for local needs. The governor argues that these funds should go for projects benefiting the state as a whole. His priorities include relief of traffic congestion through corridor improvements, HOV expansion, freight mobility improvements, and further investments in rail infrastructure.

The governor's transportation expenditure plan uses Referendum 49 funds for the following projects during a six-year period:

| Dollars in Millions                     | 1999-2001       | 2001-2003       | 2003-2005       | Total             |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Local Government</b>                 |                 |                 |                 |                   |
| Transportation Improvement Board Grants | \$11.80         | \$18.20         | \$20.00         | \$50.00           |
| Distribution to Cities                  | 11.8            | 18.2            | 20              | 50                |
| Distribution to Counties                | 11.8            | 18.2            | 20              | 50                |
| <b>Highways</b>                         |                 |                 |                 |                   |
| Corridor Improvements                   | 142.1           | 217.9           | 240             | 600               |
| Freight Mobility Projects (State)       | 46.5            | 71.4            | 78.6            | 196.5             |
| Core HOV Projects                       | 153.9           | 236.1           | 260             | 650               |
| Additional Improvement Projects         | 33.6            | 51.6            | 56.8            | 142               |
| Freight Mobility Projects (Local)       | 34              | 52.1            | 57.4            | 143.5             |
| <b>State Ferries</b>                    |                 |                 |                 |                   |
| Terminal Preservation                   | 20.7            | 32.3            | 13.5            | 66.5              |
| Expand Passenger Only Program           | 96.9            | 36.6            | -               | 133.5             |
| <b>Public Transportation and Rail</b>   |                 |                 |                 |                   |
| Rail Capital Improvements               | 60              | 70              | 20              | 150               |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>\$623.10</b> | <b>\$822.60</b> | <b>\$786.30</b> | <b>\$2,232.00</b> |

Included in the plan are these specific projects:

Corridor Investments — \$600 million

- SR 18 Issaquah/Hobart to I-90
- SR 509 Sea-Tac to I-5
- SR 395/North Spokane Corridor
- SR 552 Woodinville to Monroe
- SR 525 Mulkilteo speedway
- SR 539 Bellingham to Border

Core HOV Projects — \$650 million

- SR 405
- SR 167 to Auburn
- I-5 from Seattle to US 2 in Everett
- I-5 from Seattle to SR 16 in Tacoma

Washington State Ferries — \$200 million

- Accelerate preservation of selected trestles and dolphins. Replace aged maintenance facilities at Eagle Harbor
- Construct the 4 passenger-only ferries authorized in 1998, and do related terminal improvements.

Freight Mobility Projects — \$340 million

- The Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board will choose projects promoting unrestricted movement of freight in the state. Locke identifies 30 possible freight mobility projects.

Local Government — \$150 million

- \$50 million each for cities and counties, consistent with gas tax distribution formulas.
- \$50 million for grants for local salmon recovery, administered by the Transportation Improvement Board.

Other Improvement Projects — \$142 million

- Environmental mitigation for more stormwater retrofit projects, and capitalization of the Environmental Mitigation Revolving Account — \$20 million
- Safety improvements for high-accident locations and corridors. — \$50 million
- Economic initiatives to address bridge restrictions and all-weather highways. — \$31 million
- Additional mobility projects selected by the Transportation Commission. — \$41 million

Rail Capital Investments — \$150 million

- Investments in rail infrastructure and purchase of additional passenger cars to reduce travel time and meet customer demand.

During the debate last fall, proponents of the referendum maintained that, even without a specific project list, legislators were in substantial agreement with the governor's transportation priorities. Now that the voters have authorized the bond sale and the governor has issued his proposal, the legislature should limit parochial wrangling and begin the long-delayed road work.

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| <b>Washington Research Council</b>  |  |
|  | 108 S Washington St, Suite 406<br>Seattle WA 98104-3408<br>(206) 467-7088 or 1-800-294-7088<br>fax (206) 467-6957<br><a href="http://www.researchcouncil.org">http://www.researchcouncil.org</a> |