



Seattle City Council

Central Staff – Divided Report

For consideration at Full Council

Committee: Transportation Committee
Council Bill Number: 118366
Short Title: Heavy Haul Network
Full Council Date: October 19, 2015
Analyst: Peter Lindsay

Overview

Council Bill (C.B.) 118366 establishes a heavy haul network on certain City streets increasing the maximum gross vehicle weight from 80,000 pounds to 98,000 pounds for permitted trucks engaged in hauling ocean-going containers between multi-modal distribution centers in the SODO neighborhood and the West Duwamish Manufacturing and Industrial Area. The legislation establishes a new permit and inspection regime to allow access and use of the proposed heavy haul network and authorizes the Director of the Department of Transportation to execute an agreement with the Port of Seattle to accept funds.

History of Legislation

The Executive transmitted C.B. 118366 to the Council on March 20, 2015. During Executive briefings to councilmembers a number of concerns were expressed. As a consequence, the Executive requested a delay on the introduction and referral of the bill until concerns could be addressed in the form of updated legislation. In early September 2015, the Executive updated C.B. 118366 by attaching a formal cost sharing agreement with the Port of Seattle and requested the bill be placed on the introduction and referral calendar. The legislation and attached agreement were presented and discussed at the September 11 Transportation Committee meeting. Changes to the agreement were requested by the Committee and the Executive drafted an amended version of the agreement in cooperation with the Port of Seattle. At the September 22 Transportation Committee meeting, the Committee voted to recommend passage of the bill by the Full Council. The legislation, as amended, included a revised memorandum of understanding formalizing expectations between the City and the Port as to the level of investments necessary to protect City assets from damage due to changes in overweight limits for container trucks.

Yes 4 (Burgess, Godden, Okamoto, Rasmussen)
No 2 (O'Brien, Sawant)

Majority Position (Burgess, Godden, Okamoto, Rasmussen)

C.B. 118366 will preserve important maritime jobs and further the Port of Seattle's ability to compete in a fiercely contested global container market. The amended Memorandum of Understanding attached to this legislation also takes into account previous Council concerns such as the Port's financial contribution to the proposed heavy haul network, and ultimately represents a fair bargain that mitigates risks to the City and formalizes the Port's role as a partner. Although we are sensitive to issues involving labor standards and environmental

conservation, we find that C.B. 118366 represents a positive step towards improving working conditions for drayage drivers and making the Seattle's seaport more competitive while protecting City assets.

Minority Position (O'Brien, Sawant)

A healthy maritime economy that serves Seattle looks out for the conditions of working people at every step of the shipping process. We have serious concerns about the treatment of drayage truck drivers in the operations at the Port of Seattle and do not approve advancing a formal partnership with the Port to establish a Heavy Haul corridor until we see improvements in working conditions for the drayage truck drivers who will use the corridor. These improvements start with permanent restroom facilities on the Terminals where drayage truck drivers work, a basic workplace necessity that drivers have requested for nearly five years. They should also include providing drivers will full information about the content of weight of their loads, space, time and compensation to complete federally required pre-trip safety inspections. We are encouraged by the Port's recent efforts to expand restroom facilities at Terminal T-18.

It should be an essential priority for Councilmembers to promote good quality, living-wage unionized jobs. This does not conflict in any way with our goal of ensuring that Seattle and the maritime industry continue to economically prosper.

As Councilmembers, we also have an interest in protecting the City's assets. While the Port has made a ten year commitment to capital investments in the heavy haul network, their two-year commitment leaves open unanswered questions about who will pay for operations in year three and beyond. Operating costs must not fall to the City or on the backs of drayage truck drivers by way of increased permit fees as they have in other jurisdictions.

A maritime industry that shifts the burden of safety requirements onto their lowest wage workers does not serve Seattle. We reject a framework that pits economic competitiveness with the dignity of workers and at the time of the Committee vote, oppose advancing CB 118366.