Assembly Bill No. 521

CHAPTER 542

An act to amend Section 143 of the Streets and Highways Code, relating to transportation.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2006. Filed with Secretary of State September 28, 2006.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 521, Sharon Runner. Transportation facilities: public-private partnerships.

Existing law, as amended by Chapter 32 of the Statutes of 2006, authorizes the Department of Transportation and regional transportation agencies, as defined, until January 1, 2012, to enter into up to 4 comprehensive development lease agreements with public and private entities, or consortia of those entities, for certain transportation projects that may charge certain users of those projects tolls and user fees, subject to various terms and requirements. Under these provisions, all negotiated lease agreements must be submitted to the Legislature for approval or rejection, with approval to be achieved by enactment of a statute.

This bill would modify these provisions to instead provide that the Legislature has 60 legislative days to act after submittal of a negotiated lease agreement. The agreement would be deemed approved unless both houses of the Legislature concur in the passage of a resolution rejecting the agreement.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 143 of the Streets and Highways Code, as amended by Chapter 32 of the Statutes of 2006, is amended to read:

143. (a) (1) "Regional transportation agency" means any of the following:

(A) A transportation planning agency as defined in Section 29532 or 29532.1 of the Government Code.

(B) A county transportation commission as defined in Section 130050, 130050.1, or 130050.2 of the Public Utilities Code.

(C) Any other local or regional transportation entity that is designated by statute as a regional transportation agency.

(D) A joint exercise of powers authority as defined in Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 6500) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code, with the consent of a transportation planning agency or

a county transportation commission for the jurisdiction in which the transportation project will be developed.

(2) "Transportation project" means one or more of the following: planning, design, development, finance, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, improvement, acquisition, lease, operation, or maintenance of highway, public street, rail, or related facilities supplemental to existing facilities currently owned and operated by the department or regional transportation agencies that is consistent with the requirements of paragraph (2) of subdivision (b).

(b) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, only the department, in cooperation with regional transportation agencies, and regional transportation agencies, may solicit proposals, accept unsolicited proposals, negotiate, and enter into comprehensive development lease agreements with public or private entities, or consortia thereof, for transportation projects.

(2) The number of projects authorized pursuant to this section shall be limited to two projects in northern California and two projects in southern California. The California Transportation Commission shall select the candidate projects from projects nominated by the department or a regional transportation agency. No less than two of the selected projects shall be nominated by a regional transportation agency. The projects shall be primarily designed to improve goods movement, including, but not limited to, exclusive truck lanes and rail access and operational improvements. The projects shall address a known forecast demand, as determined by the department or regional transportation agency.

(3) All negotiated lease agreements shall be submitted to the Legislature for approval or rejection. Prior to submitting a lease agreement to the Legislature, the department or regional transportation agency shall conduct at least one public hearing at a location at or near the proposed facility for purposes of receiving public comment on the lease agreement. Public comments made during this hearing shall be submitted to the Legislature with the lease agreement. Unless the Legislature passes a resolution, with both houses concurring, rejecting a negotiated lease agreement within 60 legislative days of the agreement being submitted to it, the agreement shall be deemed approved. A lease agreement may not be amended by the Legislature.

(c) For the purpose of facilitating those projects, the agreements between the parties may include provisions for the lease of rights-of-way in, and airspace over or under, highways, public streets, rail, or related facilities for the granting of necessary easements, and for the issuance of permits or other authorizations to enable the construction of transportation projects. Facilities subject to an agreement under this section shall, at all times, be owned by the department or the regional transportation agency, as appropriate. For department projects, the commission shall certify the department's determination of the useful life of the project in establishing the lease agreement terms. In consideration therefor, the agreement shall provide for complete reversion of the leased facility, together with the

right to collect tolls and user fees, to the department or regional transportation agency, at the expiration of the lease at no charge to the department or regional transportation agency. At time of reversion, the facility shall be delivered to the department or regional transportation agency, as applicable, in a condition that meets the performance and maintenance standards established by the department and that is free of any encumbrance, lien, or other claims.

(d) (1) The department or a regional transportation agency may exercise any power possessed by it with respect to transportation projects to facilitate the transportation projects pursuant to this section. The department, regional transportation agency, and other state or local agencies may provide services to the contracting entity for which the public entity is reimbursed, including, but not limited to, planning, environmental planning, environmental certification, environmental review, preliminary design, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, maintenance, and policing of these transportation projects. The department or regional transportation agency, as applicable, shall regularly inspect the facility and require the lessee to maintain and operate the facility according to adopted standards. The lessee shall be responsible for all costs due to development, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and reconstruction, and operating costs.

(2) In selecting private entities with which to enter into these agreements, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the department and regional transportation agencies may, but are not limited to, utilizing one or more of the following procurement approaches:

(A) Solicitations of proposals for defined projects and calls for project proposals within defined parameters.

(B) Prequalification and short-listing of proposers prior to final evaluation of proposals.

(C) Final evaluation of proposals based on qualifications, best value, or both. If final evaluation is to be based on best value, the California Transportation Commission shall develop and adopt criteria for making that evaluation prior to evaluation of a proposal.

(D) Negotiations with proposers prior to award.

(E) Acceptance of unsolicited proposals, with issuance of requests for competing proposals.

(3) No agreement entered into pursuant to this section shall infringe on the authority of the department or a regional transportation agency to develop, maintain, repair, rehabilitate, operate, or lease any transportation project. Lease agreements may provide for reasonable compensation to the leaseholder for the adverse effects on toll revenue or user fee revenue due to the development, operation, or lease of supplemental transportation projects with the exception of any of the following:

(A) Projects identified in regional transportation plans prepared pursuant to Section 65080 of the Government Code and submitted to the commission as of the date the commission selected the project to be developed through a lease agreement, as provided in this section, unless

provided by the lease agreement approved by the department or regional transportation agency and the commission.

(B) Safety projects.

(C) Improvement projects that will result in incidental capacity increases.

(D) Additional high-occupancy vehicle lanes or the conversion of existing lanes to high-occupancy vehicle lanes.

(E) Projects located outside the boundaries of a public-private partnership project, to be defined by the lease agreement.

However, compensation to a leaseholder shall only be made after a demonstrable reduction in use of the facility resulting in reduced toll or user fee revenues, and may not exceed the reduction in those revenues.

(e) (1) Agreements entered into pursuant to this section shall authorize the contracting entity to impose tolls and user fees for use of a facility constructed by it, and shall require that over the term of the lease the toll revenues and user fees be applied to payment of the capital outlay costs for the project, the costs associated with operations, toll and user fee collection, administration of the facility, reimbursement to the department or other governmental entity for the costs of services to develop and maintain the project, police services, and a reasonable return on investment. The agreement shall require that, notwithstanding Sections 164, 188, and 188.1, any excess toll or user fee revenue either be applied to any indebtedness incurred by the contracting entity with respect to the project, improvements to the project, or be paid into the State Highway Account, or for all three purposes, except that any excess toll revenue under a lease agreement with a regional transportation agency may be paid to the regional transportation agency for use in improving public transportation in and near the project boundaries.

(2) Lease agreements shall establish specific toll or user fee rates. Any proposed increase in those rates during the term of the agreement shall first be approved by the department or regional transportation agency after at least one public hearing conducted at a location near the proposed or existing facility.

(3) The collection of tolls and user fees for the use of these facilities may be extended by the commission or regional transportation agency at the expiration of the lease agreement. However, those tolls or user fees may not be used for any purpose other than for the improvement, continued operation, or maintenance of the facility.

(4) Tolls and user fees may not be charged to noncommercial vehicles with three or fewer axles.

(f) The plans and specifications for each transportation project developed, maintained, repaired, rehabilitated, reconstructed, or operated pursuant to this section shall comply with the department's standards for state transportation projects. The lease agreement shall include performance standards, including, but not limited to, levels of service. The agreement shall require facilities on the state highway system to meet all requirements for noise mitigation, landscaping, pollution control, and

safety that otherwise would apply if the department were designing, building, and operating the facility. If a facility is on the state highway system, the facility leased pursuant to this section shall, during the term of the lease, be deemed to be a part of the state highway system for purposes of identification, maintenance, enforcement of traffic laws, and for the purposes of Division 3.6 (commencing with Section 810) of Title 1 of the Government Code.

(g) Failure to comply with the lease agreement in any significant manner shall constitute a default under the agreement and the department or the regional transportation agency, as appropriate, shall have the option to initiate processes to revert the facility to the public agency.

(h) The assignment authorized by subdivision (c) of Section 130240 of the Public Utilities Code is consistent with this section.

(i) A lease to a private entity pursuant to this section is deemed to be public property for a public purpose and exempt from leasehold, real property, and ad valorem taxation, except for the use, if any, of that property for ancillary commercial purposes.

(j) Nothing in this section is intended to infringe on the authority to develop high-occupancy toll lanes pursuant to Section 149.4, 149.5, or 149.6

(k) Nothing in this section shall be construed to allow the conversion of any existing nontoll or non-user-fee lanes into tolled or user fee lanes with the exception of a high-occupancy vehicle lane that may be operated as a high-occupancy toll lane for vehicles not otherwise meeting the requirements for use of that lane.

(*l*) The lease agreement shall require the lessee to provide any information or data requested by the California Transportation Commission or the Legislative Analyst. The commission, in cooperation with the Legislative Analyst, shall annually prepare a report on the progress of each project and ultimately on the operation of the resulting facility. The report shall include, but not be limited to, a review of the performance standards, a financial analysis, and any concerns or recommendations for changes in the future.

(m) No lease agreements may be entered into under this section on or after January 1, 2012.

(n) To the extent that the design-build procurement method is utilized for the award of construction or design contracts for projects authorized under this section, those contracts shall be subject to the requirements, parameters, and processes set forth in Chapter 6.5 (commencing with Section 6800) of Part 1 of Division 2 of the Public Contract Code, if that chapter is added by either Assembly Bill 143 of the 2005–06 Regular Session or Senate Bill 59 of the 2005–06 Regular Session.

O