



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 897 (Substitute S-1 as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Darrin Camilleri
Committee: Local Government

Date Completed: 7-10-24

RATIONALE

Grosse Ile Township is a small island community in Wayne County off the coast of southeast Detroit. There are currently two bridges that individuals can use to cross the Detroit River between the mainland and Grosse Ile Township. The northernmost bridge, called the Grosse Ile Toll Bridge, is privately-operated. According to testimony before the Senate Committee on Local Government, the owner may set the toll, fee, and weight limit for the Bridge, which has restricted access to the Township. Reportedly, many heavier vehicles must be weight-controlled to cross the Bridge due to the Bridge's weakness, leading to logistical hardships for the Township. The owner is considering selling the Bridge to the Township, and the bill would allow the Township to purchase the Bridge, which could improve its usefulness for the public by allowing the Township to strengthen it.

CONTENT

(COMPANION BILL LINK: [H.B. 5779](#))

The bill would amend Chapter 16 of the Revised Statutes of 1846, which governs the powers and duties of townships, to do the following:

- Allow a township with a population between 10,000 and 15,000 individuals, located in a county with a population greater than 1.5 million, to acquire, own, or operate a public service facility that provided transportation to the township.**
- Allow the township that owned or operated the facility to charge a user fee.**
- Require a township that owned or operated a facility to implement an inspection program that complied with Federal law for all bridges owned or operated by the township to be eligible to receive State and Federal money related to owning or operating a bridge.**

Under the bill, a township with a population between 10,000 and 15,000, located in a county with a population greater than 1.5 million, could acquire, own, or operate, within or outside the township's corporate limits, a public service facility that provided transportation to the township and the township's inhabitants.

"Public service facility" would mean a bridge, a roadway or ramp that supports the bridge, and any other equipment, building, structure, parking area, appurtenance, or other real or personal property necessary or desirable for and any future construction to replace a bridge, the roadway or ramp that supports the bridge, and any other equipment, building, structure, parking area, appurtenance, or other real or personal property that is necessary for the bridge.

A township that owned or operated a public service facility that provided transportation to the township and the township's inhabitants could charge a user fee.

"User fee" would mean a toll, consumption charge, rent, license fee, or another similar or ancillary charge that is related to the use or purchase of a public service facility. The term

would include a fee or charge for creating, maintaining, administering, billing, and collecting an account.

To be eligible to receive State and Federal money related to owning or operating a bridge, a township that owned or operated a public service facility would have to implement an inspection program that complied with the Federal requirements for bridge inspection standards under 23 USC 144 (National Bridge and Tunnel Inventory and Inspection Standards) for all bridges owned or operated by the township.

Proposed MCL 41.2b

PREVIOUS LEGISLATION

(This section does not provide a comprehensive account of previous legislative efforts on this subject matter.)

Senate Bill 897 is a companion bill to House Bill 5779.

BACKGROUND

Grosse Ile Township in Wayne County would meet the bill's population requirements.

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

The Gross Ile Toll Bridge is privately-owned and operated, which reduces residents' ability to hold the owner accountable for its condition. Accountability matters because the tolls, fees, and weight limit of the Bridge affect the daily lives of the Township's inhabitants. If the tolls or fees were overcharged, it could reduce commerce for the Township, as less people would be willing to drive across the Bridge and spend money in the Township. If the weight limit were poorly enforced, that could create unsafe conditions on the Bridge. The Township should be able to purchase the Bridge to allow residents to participate in decisions about a piece of critical infrastructure that affects their daily lives.

Legislative Analyst: Alex Krabill

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would allow townships in Wayne County with populations between 10,000 and 15,000 to create a public service facility that provided transportation. It would not have a fiscal impact on the State. It could have a fiscal impact on the townships if they choose to create this public service facility. The bill would allow for the collection of fees to pay for this service. Assuming the township created the public service facility, the bill would increase costs for the township and increase revenue from the fees. It is unknown whether the fees generated would cover the full cost of the service.

Fiscal Analyst: Bobby Canell

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.