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Horse Center Measure Passes Senate

Amendments added: [☒ Longview, Yakima, Federal Way Projects Join Bill](#)

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A bill to support the proposed Southwest Washington Regional Equestrian Center passed the state Senate Tuesday, but will head back to the House after three projects to build other public facilities in the state were amended into the legislation.

The bill was amended Tuesday afternoon to allow theaters in Longview and Yakima, along with a performing arts center in Federal Way, to take advantage of state sale taxes to build their own facilities.

The equestrian center bill had already been sandwiched with a proposal to build a minor league hockey stadium in Kent.

The Senate passed the bill 41-7. The House has already passed the bill, but now must confirm the amendments for the measure to pass the full Legislature.

The bill would create a public facilities district, which would help pay for the construction of the equestrian center at exit 63 on Interstate 5 near Winlock, with sales tax money from the state's .033 percent fund.

The 7,000-seat domed arena is expected to cost between \$55 million and \$70 million. About \$8 million would be public money, and the rest would come from private investors.

Larry Hewitt, project manager for the REQ Center, said the project has plenty of support from House and Senate leadership, and said he doesn't anticipate this latest twist will doom the bill.

"We know we've got support from leadership, so I think we're OK," Hewitt said.

Lars Erickson, spokesman for Gov. Chris Gregoire, wrote in an e-mail that the project was included in the governor's budget, but said she's waiting to see what the Legislature will do.

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