
**Labor & Workforce Development
Committee**

HB 1608

Brief Description: Concerning the marine employees' commission.

Sponsors: Representatives Appleton, Angel, Sells, Fitzgibbon, Seaquist, Ryu, Stanford and Hansen.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Maintains the Marine Employees' Commission within the Public Employment Relations Commission to hear certain disputes between labor and management arising out of the operation of the ferry system.

Hearing Date: 2/7/13

Staff: Alexa Silver (786-7190).

Background:

The Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) administers and enforces most public sector collective bargaining laws in Washington. The PERC consists of three Commissioners appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate. Staff of the PERC issue decisions in representation, unfair labor practice, and unit clarification cases, and the Commissioners hear appeals from these decisions.

Until 2011 the Marine Employees' Commission (MEC) was a separate state agency that administered the Marine Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (MECBA). The MEC consists of three members appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate.

With the enactment of Second Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5742 in 2011, the MEC was moved to the PERC. During a transition period that will last until July 1, 2013, the MEC adjusts complaints, grievances, and disputes between labor and management arising out of the operation

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of the ferry system. The MEC also acts in place of the PERC Commissioners for appeals of decisions in representation, unfair labor practice, and unit clarification cases. Effective July 1, 2013, the MEC is eliminated, and all marine employee issues are handled by the PERC.

On June 30, 2013, additional provisions related to ferry employee grievances and disputes over the interpretation and application of collective bargaining agreements also expire. The statute that will expire permits a ferry employee collective bargaining agreement to provide procedures for grievances and disputes, including binding arbitration. If grievance procedures are not provided in a collective bargaining agreement, the statute requires ferry system employees to submit grievances to the MEC.

Summary of Bill:

The MEC is retained within the PERC to: (1) adjust complaints, grievances, and disputes between labor and management arising out of the operation of the ferry system; and (2) hear appeals of decisions in representation, unfair labor practice, and unit clarification cases.

In addition, the expiration date is deleted for the statute related to grievances and disputes. The law will continue to specify what a collective bargaining agreement may allow with respect to binding arbitration of grievances and disputes over the interpretation and application of the agreement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 2/1/2013.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.