

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1989

As Reported By House Committee On:

Trade & Economic Development

Title: An act relating to marine tourism with British Columbia, Canada.

Brief Description: Requiring consideration of international ferry closures' impact on tourism.

Sponsors: Representatives Van Luven, Morris, Sehlin, Conway, DeBolt, Dickerson, Quall, Kastama, Doumit, Cooper, Gardner, Veloria, Blalock, Poulsen, Chopp, Keiser, O'Brien, Anderson and Linville.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Trade & Economic Development: 2/24/97, 2/27/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Van Luven, Chairman; Dunn, Vice Chairman; Veloria, Ranking Minority Member; Sheldon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander; Ballasiotes; Mason; McDonald and Morris.

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

Background: The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) operates the state's ferry system. The department is required to consult with ferry users before implementing a substantial expansion or curtailment in the level of service, or a revision in the schedule of ferry tolls or charges.

The department's public consultation process involves (1) public hearings in the affected communities; (2) a review of the proposed changes with the affected local ferry advisory committees; (3) conducting a survey of affected ferry users; or (4) a combination of all of them.

Summary of Substitute Bill: As part of the public participation process regarding levels of service, the WSDOT must consider the impact of lost tourism on the local community and the state, on ferry runs between Washington and British Columbia, Canada.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill adds an emergency clause.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Tourism is an important part of the area's economy. The Anacortes to Sidney, B.C., ferry run is the third most profitable ferry run in the state ferry system. The WSDOT should take into consideration the impact of tourism on the local community before they make any changes to an existing ferry run. This bill would require the department to add a tourism impact requirement to the public consultation process.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Morris, prime sponsor (pro); and Ian Muntz and Mike Ryherd, city of Anacortes (pro).