
Transportation Committee

HB 2044

Brief Description: Requiring Washington state ferries to create a comprehensive incident and accident investigation policy.

Sponsors: Representatives Seaquist, Smith, Angel, Nelson, Morris, Finn, Appleton, Roberts, Rolfes, Cody and Carlyle.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires the Department of Transportation Ferries Division to create a comprehensive incident and accident investigation policy and provide a copy to the Legislature by November 1, 2009.
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Hearing Date: 2/16/09

Staff: Teresa Berntsen (786-7301)

Background:

The Department of Transportation (DOT) Ferries Division operates and maintains ferry vessels and terminals that link eight Washington counties and one Canadian province. The Division investigates accidents and incidents involving ferry vessels or terminals owned or operated by the DOT. Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2878, Section 224 Laws of 2008 (the 2008 transportation budget) required the DOT to review its ferry system accident and incident investigation procedures and report the results to the Legislature by November 1, 2008.

Summary of Bill:

The DOT Ferries Division must create a comprehensive incident and accident investigation policy and provide a copy to the legislature by November 1, 2009. The policy must contain:

- the definition of an incident and an accident and the type of investigation that is required by both types of events;

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- the process for appointing an investigating officer and a description of the authorities and responsibilities of the investigating officer. The investigating officer must:
 - (a) have the appropriate training and experience as determined by the policy; and
 - (b) not have been involved in the incident or accident so as to avoid any conflict of interest;
- the process of working with affected employees and the appropriate union officials;
- the open and cooperative approach to be used with the United States Coast Guard;
- the process for review, approval, and implementation of any approved recommendations within the DOT; and
- the process for keeping the public informed of the investigation and its outcomes, in compliance with any affected employee's collective bargaining agreement and state laws and rules regarding public disclosure.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 2/12/09.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.