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**Transportation Committee**

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**SSB 5912**

**Brief Description:** Creating the Produce Railcar Pool.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Highways & Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Mulliken, Haugen, Sheahan, Horn, Parlette, Rasmussen and Spanel).

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Establishes a railcar program within the Department of Transportation (DOT) for perishable commodities.
- Directs the DOT to work with stakeholders in implementing the program.

**Hearing Date:** 4/4/03

**Staff:** Jay Alexander (786-7339).

**Background:**

The transportation of agricultural products is accomplished by a variety of methods, including truck and rail.

**Summary of Bill:**

Allows the DOT to establish a Washington Produce Railcar Pool of refrigerated railcars to ship fresh and processed produce.

To the extent that funds are appropriated, the DOT may: 1) operate the program in coordination with interested parties; 2) purchase or lease new/used refrigerated railcars, accept donations, and refurbish or remodel the railcars; 3) hire a transportation management firm to operate the day to day operations, and; 4) involve rail financing experts to help accomplish operating arrangements. In managing the railcars, the DOT (or management firm) must distribute the railcars throughout the state, and in times of excess capacity, may loan the railcars to other shippers.

The Produce Railcar Pool Account is created for the deposit of receipts of funding and operating revenue, and for the payment of operating costs. Interest on earnings from

investments is retained in the account.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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