

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2730

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to the provision of ferry service by port districts.

Brief Description: Addressing the provision of ferry service by port districts.

Sponsors: Representatives Rolfes, Appleton and Hudgins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/21/08, 1/29/08 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the areas in which port districts may offer ferry service to include the Puget Sound.
- Expands eligibility for the Ferry Grant Program to include passenger-only ferry systems operated by port districts.
- Adds port districts to the passenger-only ferry service providers with which the Washington State Ferries system must collaborate for terminal operations.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 23 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Flannigan, Vice Chair; Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Schindler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Armstrong, Campbell, Eddy, Herrera, Hudgins, Jarrett, Kristiansen, Loomis, Rolfes, Sells, Simpson, Smith, Springer, Takko, Wallace, Warnick, Williams and Wood.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In 2006 the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) was directed to establish a grant program to provide operating or capital grants for passenger-only ferries (POF) operated by counties, county ferry districts, and public transportation benefit districts. At the same time, the Washington State Ferries (WSF) were required to collaborate with counties, county ferry districts, and public transportation benefit districts offering POF service for terminal operations at the WSF's existing terminals.

Port districts currently may acquire, lease, construct, purchase, maintain, and operate passenger-carrying vessels on interstate navigable rivers of Washington and intrastate waters of adjoining states.

Summary of Bill:

The area in which port districts may offer ferry service is expanded to include the Puget Sound.

The types of entities eligible to receive grants for operating and capital expenditures from the Ferry Grant Program are expanded to include POF systems operated by port districts.

Port districts are added to the list of POF service providers with which the WSF system must collaborate for terminal operations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill was brought on behalf of the people of Kingston, who were supposed to get passenger-only ferry service more than a decade ago. This bill would allow the Port of Kingston to offer passenger-only ferry service to people in Kingston and the surrounding communities.

The Port of Kingston was established in 1919 in order to bring passenger-only ferry service to the region. The federal government has awarded the Port of Kingston a \$3.5 million grant to provide for the capital needs of a passenger-only ferry service. There were some questions as to whether funds for operations of such a service can come to a port, and this bill is designed to resolve them.

A business plan has been written that focuses on providing passenger-only ferry service to people from all over the region. This is an effort to start a self-sustaining business, but

approximately \$900,000 will be needed from the state over the course of four years in order to get it started.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Rolfes, prime sponsor; Nels Sultan, Kingston Express Association; and Mike Bookey, Port of Kingston.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.