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**ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL 1782**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives McEntire and Fey

AN ACT Relating to the operating and maintenance deficit of the Wahkiakum county ferry; and amending RCW 47.56.720.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 47.56.720 and 1992 c 82 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The legislature finds that the ferry operated by Wahkiakum county between Puget Island and Westport on the Columbia river provides ((~~service which is primarily local in nature with secondary benefits to the state highway system in providing a bypass for state route 4 and providing~~)) an important transportation bypass for state route 4 and provides the only crossing of the Columbia river between the Astoria-Megler bridge and the Longview bridge.

(2) The department is hereby authorized to enter into a continuing agreement with Wahkiakum county pursuant to which the department shall pay to Wahkiakum county from moneys appropriated for such purpose monthly amounts not to exceed ((~~eighty~~)) 85 percent of the operating and maintenance deficit ((~~with a maximum not to exceed the amount appropriated for that biennium~~)) to be used in the operation and maintenance of the Puget Island ferry, commencing July 1, 1992.

(3) The annual deficit, if any, incurred in the operation and maintenance of the ferry shall be determined by Wahkiakum county subject to the approval of the department. If ((~~eighty~~)) 85 percent of the deficit for the preceding fiscal year exceeds the total amount paid to the county for that year, the additional amount shall be paid to the county by the department upon the receipt of a properly executed voucher. ((~~The total of all payments to the county in any biennium shall not exceed the amount appropriated for that biennium.~~)) The fares established by the county shall be comparable to those used for similar runs on the state ferry system.

(4) Whenever, subsequent to June 9, 1977, state route 4 between Cathlamet and Longview is closed to traffic pursuant to chapter 47.48 RCW due to actual or potential slide conditions and there is no suitable, reasonably short alternate state route provided, Wahkiakum county is authorized to operate the Puget Island ferry on a toll-free basis during the entire period of such closure. The state's share of the ferry operations and maintenance deficit during such period shall be ((~~one hundred~~)) 100 percent.

(5) Whenever state route 4 between Cathlamet and Longview is closed to traffic, as mentioned in subsection (4) hereof, the state of Washington shall provide temporary rest room facilities at the Washington ferry landing terminal.

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