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**HOUSE BILL 1841**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Ramos, Entenman, Chapman, and Simmons

Read first time 02/21/23. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to addressing the Washington state ferries'  
2 workforce shortages; adding a new section to chapter 47.60 RCW;  
3 creating a new section; providing an effective date; and declaring an  
4 emergency.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Washington's marine highways provide vital  
7 transportation links between communities. Citizens, businesses, and  
8 visitors depend on the state's ferry system to provide safe,  
9 dependable auto and passenger service to conduct daily life and  
10 commerce activities. The legislature finds that in October 2021, the  
11 ferry system adopted an alternative service plan to recognize the  
12 lack of availability of staff to meet the United States coast guard  
13 requirements for crewing vessels. Even with this plan, service  
14 reliability dropped below 95 percent, reflecting the continued  
15 struggle of the ferry system to meet crewing requirements. The  
16 legislature further finds that the recommendations of the joint  
17 transportation committee study on ferry workforce planning, completed  
18 in December 2022, provide a pathway for addressing workforce  
19 challenges, addressing recruitment, hiring, training, employee  
20 development, and succession planning. To be successful, this  
21 recommended pathway must integrate into every step of implementation

1 the need for new, equitable systems to achieve a workforce that is  
2 inclusive and representative of the diversity of Washington's labor  
3 force. The legislature intends to assist the Washington state ferries  
4 to meet its workforce challenges, providing resources for  
5 implementing employee recruitment, hiring, training, and retention  
6 initiatives.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 47.60  
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 For the purpose of increasing the capacity of human resources  
10 functions available to the Washington state ferries as it works to  
11 address its staffing shortage:

12 (1) The department shall contract out for the administration of  
13 human resources management for the Washington state ferries. To the  
14 extent practicable, all functions of human resources management for  
15 the Washington state ferries must be performed under the contract  
16 including, but not limited to, outreach and recruitment, hiring  
17 processes, applicant assistance, workforce planning, employee  
18 engagement, and employee retention.

19 (2) The Washington state ferries shall adopt a formal strategy to  
20 implement diversity, equity, and inclusion as an essential part of  
21 its implementation of the recommendations of the 2022 joint  
22 transportation committee study on ferry workforce planning. The  
23 consultant contract for human resources management required in this  
24 section must include a specific requirement to develop this strategy.

25 (3) The competitive procurement process must select and hire an  
26 independent, expert consultant with a background in the incorporation  
27 of diversity, equity, and inclusion principals in human resources  
28 management.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
30 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of  
31 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes  
32 effect July 1, 2023.

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