

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5912

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to a state produce railcar pool.

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 History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 4/4/03 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 21 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Simpson, Vice Chair; Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Jarrett, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Campbell, Clibborn, Cooper, Dickerson, Flannigan, Hankins, Hatfield, Hudgins, Lovick, Morris, Romero, Shabro, Sullivan, Wallace and Woods.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Anderson, Mielke and Nixon.

Staff: Jay Alexander (786-7339).

Background:

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

Summary of Amended 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.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The Amended bill corrects an RCW reference that would allow the new account to retain interest earnings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The railcars will help the growers and agricultural community in moving their goods to market.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Charlie Brown, Washington State Potato Commission.