
Appropriations Committee

HB 1356

Brief Description: Updating utilities and transportation commission regulatory fees.

Sponsors: Representatives Dunshee, Sommers, DeBolt and Alexander; by request of Utilities & Transportation Commission.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes from statute the minimum fees that the WUTC charges regulated companies.
- Allows the WUTC rulemaking authority to set minimum fees for regulated companies (not to exceed \$100).
- Allows the WUTC rulemaking authority to waive part or all of the minimum fees.

Hearing Date: 2/4/03

Staff: Amy Skei (786-7140).

Background:

Companies regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) pay the cost of regulation through annual fees. Fees are based on a percentage of each company's gross annual operating revenue from intrastate operations. The minimum fee amounts are set in statute. The WUTC may adjust the fee rates as a part of its rate setting process but may not exceed the maximum rates set in statute.

The fee rates vary by category of company:

For public utility, telecommunications, and certain transportation companies regulated by the WUTC, the fee is limited to a maximum of one-tenth of one percent on the first \$50,000 plus two-tenths of one percent on any amount over \$50,000. No fee may be less than \$1.

For auto transportation companies, the fee is limited to a maximum of two-fifths of one percent. No fee may be less than \$2.50.

For commercial ferry companies, the fee is limited to a maximum of two-fifths of one percent. No fee may be less than \$5.

For solid waste collection companies, the fee is limited to a maximum of one percent. No

fee may be less than \$1.

The amount collected from the fees must reflect the reasonable cost of regulating the companies. The WUTC has no discretion to waive minimum fees set out in statute.

Summary of Bill:

The bill removes the statutorily set minimum fees that the WUTC must charge regulated companies. The WUTC receives rulemaking authority to set minimum fees charged to regulated companies in the range of \$0 to \$100. The WUTC also receives rulemaking authority to waive part or all of the minimum fees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2003.

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