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SENATE BILL 5549

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State of Washington

58th Legislature

2003 Regular Session

By Senators Prentice, Fraser, Schmidt, T. Sheldon, Kohl-Welles and Shin

Read first time 01/29/2003. Referred to Committee on Commerce & Trade.

1 AN ACT Relating to the creation of a joint legislative oversight  
2 committee on trade policy; adding a new chapter to Title 44 RCW; and  
3 declaring an emergency.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that international  
6 trade is an important part of Washington's economy with Washington as  
7 the fifth largest exporting state in the nation. The legislature  
8 further finds that World Trade Organization agreements and the North  
9 American Free Trade Agreement have implications for Washington state  
10 laws governing agriculture, services, environmental regulation, and  
11 economic subsidies. The legislature further finds that future trade  
12 agreements such as the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas may  
13 also impact Washington state. Therefore, it is the intent of the  
14 legislature to create a joint legislative oversight committee on trade  
15 policy to monitor the impact of these trade agreements on Washington  
16 state laws, and to provide a mechanism for legislators and citizens to  
17 voice their opinions and concerns about the potential impacts of these  
18 trade agreements to state and federal government officials.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.** A joint legislative oversight committee on  
2 trade policy is created, to consist of four senators and four  
3 representatives from the legislature and three ex officio members. The  
4 president of the senate shall appoint the senate members of the  
5 committee, and the speaker of the house shall appoint the house members  
6 of the committee. No more than two members from each house may be from  
7 the same political party. A list of appointees must be submitted by  
8 July 1, 2003, and before the close of each regular session during an  
9 even-numbered year. Vacancies on the committee will be filled by  
10 appointment by the remaining members. All such vacancies must be  
11 filled from the same political party and from the same house as the  
12 member whose seat was vacated. The ex officio members shall include a  
13 representative from the department of agriculture, the state trade  
14 representative, and a representative from the office of the attorney  
15 general.

16        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.** The committee shall appoint its own chair  
17 and other officers and make rules for orderly procedure.

18        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 4.** The committee has the following powers and  
19 duties:

20            (1) At least once a year, hear public testimony on the actual and  
21 potential impacts of international trade agreements and negotiations on  
22 Washington state and submit an annual report to the state trade  
23 representative's office and to the legislature regarding the public  
24 testimony;

25            (2) Maintain active communication with the state trade  
26 representative's office, the United States trade representative's  
27 office, Washington's congressional delegation, the national conference  
28 of state legislatures, and any other bodies the committee deems  
29 appropriate regarding ongoing developments in international trade  
30 agreements and policy;

31            (3) Conduct an annual assessment of the impacts of international  
32 trade agreements upon Washington law and submit the report to the  
33 legislature;

34            (4) Examine any aspects of international trade, international  
35 economic integration, and trade agreements that the members deem  
36 appropriate.

1        NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 5.**   The committee will receive the necessary  
2        staff support from both the senate and house staff resources.

3        NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 6.**   The members of the committee shall serve  
4        without additional compensation, but will be reimbursed for their  
5        travel expenses, in accordance with RCW 44.04.120, incurred while  
6        attending sessions of the committee or meetings of a subcommittee of  
7        the committee, while engaged on other committee business authorized by  
8        the committee, and while going to and coming from committee sessions or  
9        committee meetings.

10       NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 7.**   Sections 1 through 6 of this act constitute  
11       a new chapter in Title 44 RCW.

12       NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 8.**   Section 2 of this act is necessary for the  
13       immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or  
14       support of the state government and its existing public institutions,  
15       and takes effect immediately.

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