
Transportation Committee

HB 1516

Brief Description: Concerning the performance of state ferry system management.

Sponsors: Representatives Morris, Armstrong, Rolfes, Clibborn, Fitzgibbon, Liias, Maxwell, Appleton, Sells, Eddy and Smith.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (Department) Ferries Division to meet or exceed performance levels for a variety of performance criteria.
- Lists the performance criteria that the Ferries Division is to be measured against.
- Contracts out to a private management services firm the management functions of the Ferries Division if the Department does not meet 50 percent of the performance criteria.
- Creates the Washington State Ferries Accountability Board (Board) and tasks the Board with:
 - (1) establishing baseline data and target performance levels for the performance criteria;
 - (2) analyzing the Department's progress towards achievement of the performance criteria; and
 - (3) determining whether or not the management services should be contracted to a private management firm.
- Prohibits a manager in the Ferries Division from belonging to the same bargaining unit representing employees whom the manager supervises.

Hearing Date: 1/31/11

Staff: Debbie Driver (786-7143).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Washington State Ferries Division of the Department of Transportation (Department) manages the largest automobile and passenger ferry service provider in the nation. Currently, the system includes 22 vessels that serve 20 terminals and nine routes. In 2009 the Washington State Ferry System, which is part of the highway network system in western Washington, carried more than 22 million customers. The Secretary of Transportation is appointed by the Governor and appoints an Assistant Secretary of Ferries. The Assistant Secretary of Ferries is responsible for overall management of the Ferries Division.

Managers who belong to a collective bargaining unit and move to a management position are characterized as being inactive or on a leave of absence.

Summary of Bill:

The bill lists performance criteria and requires the Ferries Division to meet a variety of measurable performance criteria including: customer satisfaction, on-time performance, cost containment measures, safety, project delivery, vessel and terminal design, and employee satisfaction.

The bill creates the Washington State Ferries Accountability Board (Board) which is to be comprised of 10 members representing ferry users, the Legislature, and the executive branch. The Board is to meet annually and is tasked with establishing baseline data and target performance levels of the performance criteria. By June 30, 2013, the Board is to determine the Department's achievements toward meeting the performance criteria. If the Department does not meet or exceed 50 percent of the performance criteria, and the Board determines they have not met the criteria, the Department must competitively contract out ferry management functions to a private management services firm.

If the management functions are contracted out to a private management firm, the contract must be for a six-year period, include specific criteria and measures to be achieved by the firm, and must require that the firm retain existing collective bargaining agreements between the state and the employees' labor representatives. Contracts for ferry management functions must provide for incentive or retained payment arrangements as a means of ensuring satisfactory performance. The invitation for bid for a private sector firm process may include a preliminary request for qualifications.

The bill prohibits collective bargaining agreements from allowing Department managers to belong to the same bargaining unit representing employees whom they supervise.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2011.

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