

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## EHB 1782

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Addressing the operating and maintenance deficit of the Wahkiakum county ferry.

**Sponsors:** Representatives McEntire and Fey.

**House Committee on Transportation**  
**Senate Committee on Transportation**

### **Background:**

Any county may construct, operate and maintain ferries within the county or between counties. For counties operating ferry service under this general authority, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) may reimburse for a portion of the deficit incurred while operating a county ferry service. Currently Pierce, Skagit, Wahkiakum, and Whatcom counties operate ferries under this general authority.

For Wahkiakum County's ferry service, the WSDOT is authorized to enter into a continuing agreement to pay for 80 percent of the operating deficit for the preceding fiscal year of the ferry service, with a maximum not to exceed the amount appropriated for the biennium. Funds must be used for the operation and maintenance of the Puget Island ferry. Fares established by the county must be comparable to those on similar runs listed on the state ferry schedule.

State support for the Wahkiakum County ferry operations is intended to recognize that the Wahkiakum County ferry provides services which are primarily local in nature with secondary benefits to the state highway system in providing a bypass for State Route 4 and providing the only crossing of the Columbia River between the Astoria-Megler Bridge and the Longview Bridge.

### **Summary:**

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

The continuing agreement between the WSDOT and Wahkiakum County must provide for payment of 85 percent of the operating deficit of the county's ferry service.

The legislative findings are revised to recognize that the Wahkiakum County ferry provides an important transportation bypass for State Route 4 and provides the only crossing of the Columbia River between the Astoria-Megler Bridge and the Longview Bridge.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	96	0	
Senate	48	0	(Senate amended)
House	96	0	(House concurred)

**Effective:** July 23, 2023