
Local Government Committee

SB 5995

Brief Description: Concerning moneys available to a port district allocated for the purchase of zero and near zero emission cargo handling equipment.

Sponsors: Senators Salomon, Wilson, J. and Hasegawa.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the expiration date on the authorization for port districts and port development authorities to purchase zero and near zero emissions cargo handling equipment, and on the prohibition on districts and authorities purchasing fully automated marine cargo handling equipment.

Hearing Date: 2/18/26

Staff: Kellen Wright (786-7134).

Background:

Port districts are a type of special purpose district that can be created with voter approval. Port districts are empowered to acquire, construct, maintain, operate, develop, and regulate harbor improvements; rail or motor transfer and terminal facilities; water transfer and terminal facilities; air transfer or terminal facilities; other commercial transportation, transfer, handling, storage, and terminal facilities; and industrial improvements. Port districts can charge fees for the use or lease of their facilities and can impose property tax levies. Currently, there are 75 port districts in Washington.

A port development authority can be created by a port district, or jointly by two port districts if both are located in counties that had a population of more than 800,000 people on July 24, 2015, to manage the maritime activities of the port district or districts. The Port of Seattle and the Port

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of Tacoma have formed a port development authority, The Northwest Seaport Alliance.

Marine cargo can come in various forms. For example, cargo can be transported unpackaged as bulk cargo or in individual containers like barrels as break bulk cargo. Most non-bulk cargo is transported by standardized container. Such containers can be transferred between different modes of transportation without removing the cargo from the container. Ports use a variety of equipment and machinery to handle cargo, including, among other things, cranes, straddle carriers, and reach stackers.

Port districts and port development authorities are authorized to use funds to purchase zero and near-zero emissions cargo handling equipment and related infrastructure for the use of the district, the authority, or lessees or tenants of the district or authority.

Districts and authorities are prohibited, however, from using funds to purchase fully automated marine container cargo handling equipment that is remotely operated or monitored, whether or not a human controls, or can intervene to control, the equipment.

The authorization to purchase zero and near zero emissions cargo handling equipment, and the prohibition on purchasing fully automated marine cargo handling equipment, expires on December 31, 2031.

Summary of Bill:

The expiration date on the authorization for port districts and port development authorities to purchase zero and near zero emissions cargo handling equipment, and on the prohibition on the districts and authorities purchasing fully automated marine cargo handling equipment, is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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