

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5059

As of January 20, 2025

Title: An act relating to Washington state ferries captains.

Brief Description: Concerning Washington state ferries captains.

Sponsors: Senators Liias, Wellman, Stanford, Chapman, Krishnadasan, Lovelett, Nobles and Salomon.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/20/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes Washington State Ferries captains to vote to rejoin the Master, Mates and Pilots as a combined bargaining unit.
- Instructs the Public Employees Relation Commission to certify the new combined unit for 2027-29 collective bargaining in the event of an affirmative vote.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Jenna Forty (786-7755)

Background: Collective Bargaining. On a biennial basis, the Office of Financial Management negotiates, on behalf of the Governor, with unions representing state employees to modify and reach new collective bargaining agreements. Agreements are then sent to the Legislature for funding via the legislative budget process.

The International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots is a labor union based in Maryland representing licensed deck officers across various sectors of the maritime industry, including Washington State Ferries. According to the Office of Financial

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.

Management, 209 Masters, Mates and Watch Center Supervisors at the Washington State Ferries are represented by the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots Union across three labor contracts.

Legislative Background. The 2011 Legislature passed ESSB 5742 that instructed the Public Employment Relations Commission to sever all Washington State Ferries captains from the Masters, Mates and Pilots bargaining unit effective July 1, 2013. Under the current structure, captains are represented by Masters, Mates and Pilots during the collective bargaining process, but execute separate contracts.

Summary of Bill: Washington State Ferries captains in the Masters and Pilots bargaining unit are authorized to hold a vote by August 31, 2025, to indicate their preference to be included in a combined Masters, Mates and Pilots bargaining unit.

If the vote is affirmative, the Public Employees Relations Commission must certify the combined bargaining unit to be effective July 1, 2026, and in place for the 2027-29 biennial collective bargaining negotiations.

In the event the vote by the Washington State Ferries captains to be included in combined bargaining is unsuccessful, the underlying law and bargaining structure is retained.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2025.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Captains bargain separately, but contracts for deck officers are virtually the same. Everyone thinks this bill is a good idea and will lead to time savings and efficiencies.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Marko Liias, Prime Sponsor; Dan Twohig, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.