

RCW 47.60.315 Fares and pricing policies—Adoption schedule—Revenues—Vessel replacement surcharges. (1) The commission shall adopt fares and pricing policies by rule, under chapter 34.05 RCW, according to the following schedule:

(a) Each year the department shall provide the commission a report of its review of fares and pricing policies, with recommendations for the revision of fares and pricing policies for the ensuing year;

(b) By September 1st of each year, beginning in 2008, the commission shall adopt by rule fares and pricing policies for the ensuing year.

(2) The commission may adopt by rule fares that are effective for more or less than one year for the purposes of transitioning to the fare schedule in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) The commission may increase ferry fares included in the schedule of charges adopted under this section by a percentage that exceeds the fiscal growth factor.

(4) The chief executive officer of the ferry system may authorize the use of promotional, discounted, and special event fares to the general public and commercial enterprises for the purpose of maximizing capacity use and the revenues collected by the ferry system. The department shall report to the commission a summary of the promotional, discounted, and special event fares offered during each fiscal year and the financial results from these activities.

(5) Fare revenues and other revenues deposited in the Puget Sound ferry operations account created in RCW 47.60.530 may not be used to support the Puget Sound capital construction account created in RCW 47.60.505, unless the support for capital is separately identified in the fare or except as provided in section 715, chapter 333, Laws of 2021 during the 2021-2023 biennium and section 716, chapter 472, Laws of 2023 during the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium.

(6) The commission may not raise fares until the fare rules contain pricing policies developed under RCW 47.60.290, or September 1, 2009, whichever is later.

(7) The commission shall impose a vessel replacement surcharge of 25 cents on every one-way and round-trip ferry fare sold, including multiride and monthly pass fares. This surcharge must be clearly indicated to ferry passengers and drivers and, if possible, on the fare media itself.

(8) Except as provided in subsection (10) of this section, beginning May 1, 2020, the commission shall impose an additional vessel replacement surcharge in an amount sufficient to fund 25 year debt service on one 144-auto hybrid vessel taking into account funds provided in chapter 417, Laws of 2019 or *chapter . . . (SSB 5419), Laws of 2019. The department of transportation shall provide to the commission vessel and debt service cost estimates. Information on vessels constructed or purchased with revenue from the surcharges must be publicly posted including, but not limited to, the commission website.

(9) The vessel replacement surcharges imposed in this section may only be used for the construction or purchase of ferry vessels and to pay the principal and interest on bonds authorized for the construction or purchase of new ferry vessels.

(10) The commission shall not impose the additional vessel replacement surcharge in subsection (8) of this section if doing so would increase fares by more than 10 percent.

(11) For the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium, any ferry fuel surcharge imposed by the commission may not go into effect until after the ensuing regular legislative session. If a fuel surcharge is imposed as provided under this subsection, the commission must reevaluate the need for the surcharge on at least a quarterly basis to determine if the surcharge is still needed to cover increased fuel costs, and revoke the surcharge if the determination is that the surcharge is no longer needed for this purpose. [2023 c 472 § 714; 2021 c 333 § 716; 2019 c 431 § 3; 2011 1st sp.s. c 16 § 3; 2007 c 512 § 6.]

***Reviser's note:** Substitute Senate Bill No. 5419 was not enacted during the 2019 legislative session.

Effective date—2023 c 472: See note following RCW 43.19.642.

Effective date—2021 c 333: See note following RCW 43.19.642.

Effective date—2011 1st sp.s. c 16 §§ 1-15: See note following RCW 47.60.530.

Finding—Intent—2007 c 512: See note following RCW 47.06.140.