

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2256

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON TRADE, TECHNOLOGY &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, FEBRUARY 25, 1994

Brief Description: Creating the office of Washington state trade representative.

SPONSORS: House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Valle, Shin, Sheldon, Flemming, Springer, Johanson, Wineberry, Campbell, Veloria, Conway, J. Kohl and Morris)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRADE, TECHNOLOGY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Skratek, Chairman; Sheldon, Vice Chairman; Bluechel, Cantu, Erwin, M. Rasmussen and Williams.

Staff: Jeff Baird (786-7444)

Hearing Dates: February 18, 1994; February 25, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Due to the recent passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the recent Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference in Seattle, and the conclusion of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations, Washington State is increasing its efforts to expand its international markets.

In 1993 the Legislature established a 15-member council on international trade. The council was established to coordinate the various state programs promoting international trade, among other duties. Some of these programs include the market development activities of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Economic Development, including their trade offices in Tokyo, Taipei, Paris and Vladisvostok. Other state programs include the Small Business Export Finance Assistance Center, the Washington State International Trade Fair Program, the International Marketing Program for Agricultural Commodities and Trade (IMPACT) at Washington State University, and the Center for International Trade in Forest Products (CINTRAFOR) at the University of Washington.

SUMMARY:

The position of the Washington State Trade Representative is created within the Governor's office. The purposes of the trade representative are to: (1) strengthen the state's overseas marketing activities; (2) respond to industry complaints over foreign trade barriers; (3) expand export opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses; and (4) participate in the development of international agreements.

The trade representative is directed to: (1) consult with the Department of Agriculture and the various agricultural commissions on the promotion of Washington commodities overseas; (2) consult with the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development on the promotion of Washington manufacturing and service industries overseas; (3) chair the Governor's advisory committee on international trade; (4) organize and participate in export promotion events; (5) develop a long-term international trade strategy; (6) advise the Governor and Legislature on expanding international trade opportunities; and (7) request and accept gifts and grants.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

The word "foreign" is replaced by more felicitous terms.

The list of consulted agencies is expanded to include the Washington Export Finance Assistance Center, the Pacific Northwest Export Assistance Project, and the Pacific Northwest Economic Region.

Technology industries are added to the list of industries the trade representative will strengthen.

The representative's duties with regard to various export promotion programs are reduced and modified to a liaison role.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

New international agreements such as NAFTA, GATT, and APEC make necessary a trade representative analogous to the US trade representative. Washington alone accounts for 12 percent of US international trade and a trade representative will help the state retain the preeminent role.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Georgette Valle, prime sponsor; Tom Campbell, Dept. of Trade and Economic Development; Patrick Jones, WA Public Ports