

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5955

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As of March 3, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to jumbo ferry construction.

**Brief Description:** Constructing a fourth jumbo ferry.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wood, Winsley, Oke, Strannigan and Sheldon.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 3/4/97.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Vicki Fabre (786-7313)

**Background:** As a result of projected demand for transportation across Puget Sound, the 1993 Legislature authorized the construction of three new jumbo Mark II class ferries (216 vehicles; 2,500 passengers). Legislation authorizing the jumbo Mark II class ferries (SHB 1635--RCW 47.60.770-778) established competitive bidding and contracting procedures and required the new vessels to be constructed within state boundaries. A new vessel will come on line each year, beginning spring 1997. Westbound, peak period traffic in the central Puget Sound corridor is still expected to grow 122 percent over the next 20 years.

The super class ferries (160 vehicles; 2,500 passengers) were constructed in 1967. Of this class, only one (the *Elwha*) has been refurbished. The remaining three super class ferries (the *Kaleetan*, *Hyak* and *Yakima*) are at the end of their service life and are scheduled for refurbishment. Two super class ferries service the Edmonds-Kingston ferry route. Washington State Ferries (WSF) predicts that future renovations of the super class ferries will have to include more stringent passenger safety requirements imposed by the U.S. Coast Guard, thereby adding to refurbishment cost. According to WSF, when refurbishment costs exceed 66 percent of replacement cost, the decision to refurbish is questionable, and new construction may be a better option.

Proponents for construction of a fourth jumbo Mark II ferry contend that the state should take advantage of the economies and efficiencies achieved from construction of the jumbo Mark II class series and substitute renovation of the super class ferries for construction of a new jumbo vessel that would serve the central Puget Sound corridor.

**Summary of Bill:** Legislative intent is declared and the Legislature finds that the existing aging super class ferries cannot provide reliable service to accommodate the economic growth of the Puget Sound region and forecasted cross-sound travel demands.

The Legislature also finds that, because the present construction of three jumbo Mark II class ferries has resulted in the development of procedures that will result in cost savings and efficiencies, it is advantageous to the state to take advantage of such cost savings by utilizing

existing agreements, contracts, methods, equipment and techniques to construct a fourth jumbo Mark II class ferry vessel.

The Department of Transportation is authorized to enter into agreements, amending existing contracts, for the construction and acquisition of a fourth jumbo Mark II class ferry that must be of comparable quality and design and incorporate like controls, engines and a propulsion system as those utilized in the three jumbo Mark II class ferries presently under construction.

The amended contract must require that: (1) contractors comply with applicable environmental, worker health and safety, and prevailing wage rate laws and regulations; (2) the ferry be constructed within state boundaries; and (3) all warranty work be performed in the state, insofar as practicable.

The authority to enter into an agreement to construct the fourth Mark II jumbo class ferry is contingent on a legislative appropriation.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.