

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SCR 8406

As Reported by House Committee On:
Trade & Economic Development

Brief Description: Encouraging legislator trade mission participation.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Rasmussen, Franklin, Roach, Prentice, McAuliffe, Regala, Fraser, Jacobsen and Gardner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Trade & Economic Development: 2/25/02, 2/28/02 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Establishes protocol for legislative participation in Governor and executive agency-sponsored trade missions.
- Requires timely notification to the Legislature and the chairs and ranking minority members of the appropriate legislative committee involved in trade and agriculture issues of upcoming Governor and executive agency-sponsored trade missions.
- Requires the Chief Clerk and Secretary of the Senate to explore methods and make recommendations on methods to cover the cost of legislative participation in trade missions.
- Establishes a two-tier fee structure to cover costs associated with participation in a trade mission.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Veloria, Chair; Eickmeyer, Vice Chair; Van Luven, Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Chase, Dunn, Fromhold, Gombosky and Mulliken.

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

Background:

Trade missions are used to forge links that can expand trade opportunities for Washington businesses. Trade missions have usually been a joint effort between an executive branch agency, legislators, and other elected officials. Procedures, methods, and protocols need to be developed to avoid confusion of roles and to maximize the effectiveness of trade missions.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Legislature recommends that protocols for legislative participation in executive agency trade missions be established. All trade missions initiated and organized by the executive agency, including the office of the Governor must: (1) follow an established protocol order of precedence; (2) provide timely notice to the Legislature and the chair and ranking minority member of appropriate legislative committees involved in trade and agricultural issues; (3) provide the legislators a copy of the trade mission's developed objectives and an itinerary; and (4) develop a two-tier fee system that establishes separate fees for non-legislative and legislative participants, where the fee charged legislative participants does not exceed the actual cost associated with their participation.

The Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate are directed to explore and make recommendations on methods to cover the cost of legislative participation in trade missions.

The Governor or executive agency may request that a legislator serve as the honorary leader of the trade mission. At least one or more legislators from each caucus of the Senate and the House of Representatives may participate in the trade mission. Legislators with specific skills or knowledge in business, foreign markets, language, cultural expertise, or pertinent committee involvement are encouraged to participate in the trade mission. Legislators that participate in trade missions are encouraged to provide feedback concerning the trade mission and its results to the Governor or executive agency.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amended bill: (1) establishes a protocol order of precedence for participation in a trade mission that is modeled after the federal government; (2) requires notification to the chair and ranking minority member of appropriate legislative committees involved in trade and agricultural issues; (3) requires the establishment of a two-tier fee system for participation in a trade mission, where the legislative participant's fee does not exceed actual costs; and (4) requires the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate to explore and make recommendations on methods to cover the cost of legislative participation in trade missions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Testimony For: Washington is the most trade-dependent state in the nation. Trade missions help open up the doors to other markets, so Washington's goods and services can be sold internationally. Currently, we don't have established protocols for legislator participation. This resolution will establish needed protocol, which will help ensure legislator participation in the state's trade missions. Having legislators participate will provide additional visibility to the participants when they meet with foreign elected officials.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Sung Yang, Office of Trade and Economic Development; and Jim Zimmerman, Troutlodge, Inc.