

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SCR 8406

As Reported by House Committee On:
Trade & Economic Development

Brief Description: Encouraging legislator trade mission participation.

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Trade & Economic Development: 3/27/01, 3/29/01 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Establishes protocol for legislative participation in executive agency-sponsored, including those of the office of the Governor, trade missions.
- Requires timely notification to the Legislature and the chairs and ranking members of the appropriate legislative committee involved in trade and agriculture issues of upcoming executive agency-sponsored trade missions.
- Requires the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to explore and make recommendations on methods to cover the costs of legislator 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 10 members: Representatives Van Loven, Republican Co-Chair; Veloria, Democratic Co-Chair; Dunn, Republican Vice Chair; Eickmeyer, Democratic 1st Vice Chair; Fromhold, Democratic 2nd Vice Chair; Ahern, Jackley, Mulliken, O'Brien and Woods.

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 and legislators and other elected officials. Procedures, methods, and protocols need to be developed to avoid confusion of roles and to generally 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 those organized by 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 members of appropriate legislative committees involved in trade and agricultural issues; (3) provide the legislators with 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 nonlegislative participants and legislative participants, where the fee charged legislative participants does not exceed the actual associated with their participation.

The Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives must explore and make recommendations, to the Legislature, on methods to cover the costs of legislative participation in trade missions.

The executive agency may request that a legislator serve as a 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 mission and its results to the executive agency.

Amended Bill Compared to Bill:

The amendment: (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 a legislative participant's fee does not exceed actual costs; and (4) requires the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk 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 are an important tool in the sale of Washington goods and services. We need to establish procedures and protocol for elected official and agency participation in executive agency trade missions.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Senator Shin, prime sponsor.