
Transportation Committee

HB 2889

Brief Description: Restoring galley service on ferries.

Sponsors: Representatives Cooper, Woods, Rockefeller, Murray, Campbell, Simpson, G., Dunshee, Chase, McDermott, Moeller, Armstrong, Conway, Sullivan, Kenney and Kagi.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State Ferries to provide galley services to the level provided in December 2003.

Hearing Date: 2/3/04

Staff: Jill Satran (786-7315).

Background:

Over the past three decades, the Washington State Ferries (WSF) has provided on-board food service through the operation of galley services. These galley services have been operated by private concessionaires, through competitively bid vending contracts. The most recent concessionaire chose not to exercise its option to extend its five year contract, and galley services were closed on December 31, 2003.

In mid-2003 the WSF announced it would be taking a new approach to provision of ferry concessions, and would break out elements of concessions into separate services allowing bidders the option of determining which services they wanted to compete for. The seven elements are:

On-board food, beverage and retail
On-shore food and beverage
On-shore news, books and convenience stores
On-shore fast food
Cold beverage vending
Hot beverage and snack vending
Game vending

The first three areas did not receive any bids. The WSF is proceeding with the remaining four areas, awarding contracts for fast food and cold beverages, hot beverages and games.

During this period, the Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU) submitted a complaint to the Marine Employees Commission claiming that it was an unfair labor practice for the WSF to issue a request for proposal (RFP) for galley services without provisions requiring preferential hiring and requiring that the contract between the previous contractor and the IBU be honored without first negotiating the action with the union. The IBU prevailed and the WSF restructured and reissued the RFP with those provisions included.

The WSF also made other adjustments to the RFP for the three areas that did not receive any bids initially, allowing greater flexibility in approach in an effort to attract bidders. The WSF has received several letters of intent, with proposals due on February 10, 2004.

Under the former contract, galley service was provided on all car passenger vessels except for the Rhododendron and the Hiyu. Passenger-only ferries do not have galleys and three routes do not provide galley service regardless of whether the vessel has a galley:

San Juan Island Inter-Island
Point Defiance to Tahlequah
Port Townsend to Keystone

Summary of Bill:

This bill requires the WSF to restore galley service to the levels provided in December 2003, with seasonal adjustments based on historical practices. Vessels that are configured for full galley service must be maintained to provide on-going galley service in the future.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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