

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6791

As Reported by House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to liquor licenses issued to entities providing concession services on vessels owned by the Washington state ferries.

Brief Description: Concerning liquor licenses issued to entities providing concession services on ferries.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research & Development (originally sponsored by Senators Poulsen, Kohl-Welles and Rockefeller).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 2/22/06 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows an entity licensed to serve beer and/or wine on a Washington ferry to serve beer and/or wine on any ferry assigned to a designated ferry route.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Condotta, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Crouse, Holmquist, Hudgins, Kenney and McCoy.

Staff: Sarah Dylag (786-7109).

Background:

According to the Department of Transportation, the Washington State Ferries operates 22 ferries with food service areas suitable for alcohol sales. The Washington State Ferries contracts with entities to provide concession services on these ferries. The contracts correspond to particular ferry routes and not to particular ferries.

To serve alcohol, the entities providing concession services must be licensed by the Liquor Control Board as a beer and/or wine restaurant licensee. A separate license is required for each ferry upon which alcohol will be served. If the Washington State Ferries changes ferries on a particular route, the entity providing concession services must hold a separate license for the substitute ferry before serving alcohol on the ferry.

Summary of Bill:

When a beer and/or wine restaurant license is issued to a person who contracts with the Washington State Ferries to provide food and alcohol service on a designated ferry route, that beer and/or wine restaurant license applies to any ferry assigned to the designated route.

A separate license is required for each designated ferry route.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (In support) Providing food services on ferries is a difficult working environment and this bill removes one obstacle for businesses on ferries. When repair occurs on ferries, concessionaires cannot always get a license for the replacement boat in time to serve that boat. When this happens, the concessionaire loses money. Some ferries need four to six weeks of unscheduled time for maintenance.

The current liquor license is set up for a fixed owner and restaurant, and that doesn't work with a ferry. Licensing by the ferry route is more appropriate than licensing by the individual ferry. There is no public safety issue in doing so.

Food service is an important amenity on ferries for commuters and for tourists. Concessionaires on ferries also provide needed jobs. This bill will provide customer convenience and consistency on ferries and will enhance a customer's experience.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Poulson, prime sponsor; Mike Anderson, Washington State Ferries; Rick Garza, Washington State Liquor Control Board; and Bill Dorn, Sound Food.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.