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**Economic Development,  
Agriculture & Trade Committee**

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**SSB 6025**

**Brief Description:** Appointing a trade policy professional to represent the office of the Washington state trade representative.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on International Trade & Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Shin, Kohl-Welles, Thibaudeau and Rasmussen).

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires the trade policy professional appointed by the Governor to serve as the State Trade Representative to be confirmed by the Senate.

**Hearing Date:** 2/15/06

**Staff:** Tracey Taylor (786-7196).

**Background:**

In 1994, Governor Lowry created the position of Special Trade Representative as part of his International Trade Initiative. The Special Trade Representative was directed to act as the state's liaison with foreign governments on trade matters and issues, work with state agencies involved in international trade, and work with the Council on International Trade. The position was funded jointly through the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED).

In 1995, the Legislature created the State Trade Representative (STR) in statute. In the bill that passed the Legislature, the STR was designated as the "executive and administrative head of the office of the Washington state trade representative." However, Governor Lowry vetoed the section of the bill containing this language. In his veto letter, the governor stated: "[t]he state trade representative should not operate as a separate agency but should serve as an arm of the Governor's office...." The Legislature made no attempt to overrule the veto, and the STR continues to serve out of the Governor's office.

In 2003, the Legislature expanded and clarified the STR's duties. The new duties include working with the DCTED, the WSDA, and other appropriate state agencies to review and analyze proposed international trade agreements and the potential impact on Washington businesses. The responsibility of acting as liaison to the Legislature on matters relating to trade policy oversight was added. The STR is also directed to provide input to the United States Trade Representative

reflecting Washington's concerns in the development of international trade, commodity and direct investment policies. In addition, the STR is required to provide an annual report on his or her activities to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature.

**Summary of Bill:**

The trade policy professional appointed by the Governor to serve as the State Trade Representative (STR) must be confirmed by the Senate. If for any period of time the position of the STR is vacant, funds provided to the Office of the Governor for that position must revert to the General Fund.

In addition, to the other statutory duties of the STR, the STR shall promote the Governor's trade efforts by initiating, organizing and coordinating state trade missions.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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