

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2455

As of February 20, 2008

Title: An act relating to the expiration of monetary value of fare media.

Brief Description: Concerning the expiration of monetary value of fare media.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Appleton, Hudgins, Hasegawa, McIntire, Nelson and Rolfes).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/18/08, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/21/08.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Janice Baumgardt (786-7319)

Background: Implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Transportation Committee ferry study started in 2006 was done via ESHB 2358 in the 2007 legislative session. Among the statutes affected were those dealing with ferry fares.

Beginning this year, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is required to develop fare and pricing policy proposals so that they: (1) recognize that each route is unique; (2) use data from a current customer survey; (3) are developed with input from affected ferry users; (4) generate the amount of revenue required by the biennial transportation budget; (5) consider impacts on users, capacity, and local communities; (6) keep fare schedules as simple as possible; and (7) consider options for using pricing to level vehicle peak demand and increase off-peak rider-ship.

The Washington Transportation Commission (Commission) is required to adopt WSDOT fares and pricing policies. The Commission may not raise ferry fares until the fare rules contain new pricing policies described above, or September 1, 2009, whichever is later.

Under current rules, fare media (e.g., coupon books) allowing for multiple rides on the Washington State Ferry (WSF) system are valid for 90 days from the date of purchase, and are provided at a discounted rate. Additionally, the current pricing includes a surcharge for peak seasons.

Summary of Bill: The monetary value of any WSF fare media may not expire within 120 days of date of purchase. If funding is not specifically provided for in this act, it is null and void.

Appropriation: None.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute Bill: PRO: This is a small courtesy to regular commuters who are the backbone of the system. People who use the ferries less frequently, like senior citizens, will benefit from this. Ferry customers have had to put up with a lot of disruption lately and they deserve this.

CON: The tariff structure should not be changed when there are currently three ferry studies underway. This will result in a reduction of revenues which WSF can't afford.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Rolfes; Senator Rockefeller; Nels Sultan, Kingston Express.

CON: Bob Distler, San Juans.