

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 6815

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Commerce & Labor

**Title:** An act relating to health care benefits for marine employees of the department of transportation.

**Brief Description:** Concerning health care benefits for marine employees of the department of transportation.

**Sponsors:** Senator Haugen; by request of Office of Financial Management.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Commerce & Labor: 2/17/10, 2/23/10 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires that bargaining representatives for ferry employees negotiate for state contributions for health benefits as part of the coalition of other state employee bargaining representatives, and not bargain separately for health care benefits.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Condotta, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Crouse, Green, Moeller and Williams.

**Staff:** Alison Hellberg (786-7152).

**Background:**

Representatives of ferry workers in the Marine Transportation Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), who are members of a collective bargaining unit represented by a ferry employee organization, bargain over wages, hours, working conditions, insurance, and health care benefits. The employer, for purposes of bargaining with the collective bargaining representative of ferry workers, is the state of Washington. By

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statute, the WSDOT is required, unless a bargaining agreement provides otherwise, to provide insurance and health care plans as determined by the Washington State Health Care Authority. Employer contributions may exceed those for other state employees, subject to certain limits.

If an agreement has not been reached after a reasonable period of negotiations, all impasse items must be submitted to interest arbitration.

The state also collectively bargains under a separate statute with the representatives of state agency employee organizations. The matters subject to bargaining include wages, hours, and other terms of employment, and the negotiation of any question arising under a collective bargaining agreement. Health care benefits or other insurance benefits are not required to be bargained, except that the dollar amount expended on behalf of each employee for health care benefits is subject to bargaining. Negotiations for the amount of these contributions is conducted between the state and a coalition of all of the bargaining representatives of employees of state agencies. Any provision agreed to by the state and the coalition must be included in all master collective bargaining agreements.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The bargaining representatives of WSDOT ferry employees may no longer bargain for health care plans and must negotiate for state contributions for health benefits as a part of the coalition of other state employee bargaining representatives. Health care benefits are not subject to interest arbitration.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) The marine employees have always bargained separately under a separate statute. Other state employees bargain contributions to health care in a super coalition. This bill would bring the marine employees into the super coalition for negotiating contributions for health benefits. This is more efficient for the Washington State Labor Relations Office and would probably result in a small savings. This bill would also give marine employees a place at the bargaining table. The language in this bill was worked out by the unions and the Office of Financial Management.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Peter Bogdonoff, Office of the Governor and Office of Financial Management; and Gordon Baxter, Inlanboatmen's Union of the Pacific, International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots, Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 8, and Puget Sound Metal Trades Council.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.