

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6109

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As of March 19, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to ferries.

**Brief Description:** Concerning ferries.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Rockefeller, Kilmer, Sheldon, King and Swecker.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 3/19/09.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Janice Baumgardt (786-7319)

**Background:** Beginning in 2006 the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) has conducted a study of the Washington State Ferries (WSF). Since then many of the recommendations resulting from the study have been implemented through statutes or transportation budgets.

Capital funding requests must adhere to a long range strategic plan that chooses the most efficient balance between capital and operating investments. Pre-design studies are required for terminal projects.

State highways may be constructed, altered, repaired, or improved by state work forces or by contractors. The work may be done by state work forces when estimated costs are less than \$60,000.

The Marine Employees Commission (MEC) is required to complete a salary survey to be used for collective bargaining purposes with WSF unions during negotiation and arbitration purposes.

WSF proposes ferry fare changes and the Transportation Commission is charged with adopting ferry fares.

Effective June 1, 2009, all state agencies must use a minimum of 20 percent biodiesel for all its diesel-powered vessels and equipment.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee not considered.

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*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.*

**Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute):** The Legislature intends this bill, as well as the 2009 transportation budget to implement recommendations from the JTC ferry study and other changes, to make WSF more efficient.

Funding requests for vessel preservation, acquisition, and improvement projects are subject to the same requirements as terminal projects, as well as some additional pre-design study requirements aimed at ensuring that alternatives are explored and the most cost effective alternative is selected.

The dollar threshold for state work forces working on ferry vessels or terminals is increased to \$120,000 when collective bargaining agreement terms change in a way that will allow for a reduced out-of-service time of vessels.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) must complete the salary survey, rather than the MEC.

The Transportation Commission must ensure ferry fare changes cover the forecasted cost of fuel. Fare changes must also cover the cost of other operating costs less available subsidies. Before increasing the ferry fare component of fares, the Transportation Commission must ensure that WSF has considered operational changes that will reduce fuel consumption. Before raising ferry fares, the Transportation Commission must give first consideration to raising fare revenues through increased ridership.

WSF is directed to develop performance measures and report its recommendations to OFM and the Legislature in 2010.

WSF is exempt from the requirement to use a minimum amount of biodiesel for its ferry vessels.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on March 19, 2009.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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