

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6109

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, April 1, 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, 4/01/09 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6109 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Marr, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Eide, Jacobsen, Jarrett, Kauffman, Kilmer, King, Ranker and Sheldon.

**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.

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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.*

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.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended 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.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute As Passed Committee):** Language changing the dollar threshold for state work forces working on ferry vessels or terminals is removed.

Language is added regarding the Ferry Advisory Councils: the department is to meet with the legislative authority of each ferry-served county; the maximum number of members is increased; one member must be a local elected official; one member must be representative of commercial interests; other members must be representative of ferry user groups as identified in the Washington Transportation Commission market survey; and meetings with the department are changed from twice a year to no more than quarterly.

**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.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute As Heard in Committee:**

PRO: The specificities in the bill are appreciated. Planning for vessels is a good thing.

OTHER: We still need to review the bill. The MEC should continue doing the salary survey. The San Juans need a larger vessel.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Bob Distler, Washington State Transportation Commission.

OTHER: David Moseley, Washington State Ferries; Gordon Baxter, Inland Boatmen's Union (IBU), The International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots (MM&P), Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA), PSMTC, Office and Professional Employees International Union; Tim Saffle, MM&P; Robert Scott, Puget Sound Metal Trades; Jay Ubelhart, IBU; Karol Kingery, MEBA; Bob Scott, PSMTC; Ed Sutton, San Juan Ferry Advisory Committee; Lovel Pratt, San Juan County Council.