

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6081

As of January 18, 2012

Title: An act relating to the imposition of a vessel replacement surcharge on certain ferry fares.

Brief Description: Authorizing counties and ferry districts operating ferries to impose a vessel replacement surcharge on ferry fares sold.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, Swecker, Ranker, King, Hatfield, Becker, Ericksen, Nelson, Regala and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/17/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: Under current law, counties may construct, operate, and maintain ferries, and related capital facilities necessary to operate the ferries, on certain waters within or bordering their boundaries. The ferry service may be free or for toll.

Additionally, counties may create ferry districts, which are separate taxing districts created within the county to operate passenger-only ferry service. Ferry districts are authorized to impose regular and excess property taxes, and may provide the ferry service free or for toll.

Summary of Bill: Counties operating ferry service, either directly or through a county ferry district, may impose a vessel replacement surcharge on ferry fares. The surcharge may not exceed the surcharge amount included in Washington State ferry fares, which is currently \$0.25 per fare. Revenue generated from the surcharge may be used only for the construction or purchase of ferry vessels. The surcharge must be clearly indicated, if possible on the fare media itself.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Pierce County currently collects a portion of its fares for vessel and capital improvements. The charge equates to roughly \$1.00 per ticket. The language in the bill should be made clear to allow the continuation of existing fares. Most county ferries are supported by fares and some state gas taxes. Vessel replacement is mostly funded through grants, both federal and state. This bill is a good start to specifically allowing a vessel replacement surcharge.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Deb Wallace, Pierce County (Airport & Ferry Division); Gary Rowe, WA State Assn. of County Engineers.