

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1608

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Commerce & Labor, April 1, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to the marine employees' commission.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the marine employees' commission.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Appleton, Angel, Sells, Fitzgibbon, Seaquist, Ryu, Stanford and Hansen.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/08/13, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** Commerce & Labor: 3/27/13, 4/01/13 [DP, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Holmquist Newbry, Chair; Braun, Vice Chair; Conway, Ranking Member; Hasegawa, Hewitt and Keiser.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senator King.

**Staff:** Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

**Background:** Issues arising out of collective bargaining contracts involving state ferry employees have been traditionally resolved by the Marine Employees' Commission (MEC). Prior to 2011, MEC was an independent three-member commission that administered all aspects of marine employees' collective bargaining. In 2011, MEC was folded into the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC), and all marine employee unfair labor practice complaints, representation and unit clarification questions are now filed with and processed by PERC. MEC temporarily retained its composition as a three-member board, along with its authority to hear grievances and disputes between labor and management and resolve appeals of certain marine employee complaints and questions. Effective July 1, 2013, MEC will be eliminated, and all marine employee issues will be handled by PERC.

Under state marine employee collective bargaining statutes, collective bargaining agreements may provide procedures for the consideration of grievances and disputes over the interpretation and application of agreements. If grievance procedures are not established in

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the collective bargaining agreement, grievances are submitted to MEC. The statute authorizing the bargaining over grievance and dispute procedures will expire June 30, 2013.

**Summary of Bill:** The expiration date for MEC is eliminated, permanently establishing MEC within PERC. The composition and authority of MEC is unchanged.

The expiration date for the statute authorizing collective bargaining over grievance and dispute procedures is eliminated. The statute will remain in effect and will allow marine employee organizations and marine employers to bargain over grievance and dispute procedures.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Marine employees are different from state employees. They are responsible for the lives and safety of the public who ride the ferries. There should be a special group of people who hear complaints and grievances of marine employees. MEC should be continued as a division within PERC. PERC hearing examiners lack familiarity with maritime issues, and time is spent educating them on complex marine contracts that are unlike other state employee contracts. MEC has the expertise and institutional knowledge, saving time and resources to address marine employee issues. MEC has a wide range of knowledge on these issues.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Appleton, prime sponsor; Terri Mast, Inland Boatmens Union; Tim Saffle, Masters, Mates, and Pilots Union; Bill Knowlton, Marine Engineers Beneficial Assn.