

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6631

As Reported by House Committee On:
Technology & Economic Development

Title: An act relating to establishing a joint select committee to consider the political, economic, and security issues at Washington's largest ports.

Brief Description: Establishing a joint select committee to consider the political, economic, and security issues at Washington's largest ports.

Sponsors: Senators Roach and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Technology & Economic Development: 2/24/16, 2/26/16 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill
(As Amended by Committee)**

- Creates a Joint Select Committee on Washington's Largest Ports (Committee).
- Requires the Committee to report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2016.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Tarleton, Vice Chair; Smith, Ranking Minority Member; DeBolt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fey, Hudgins, Magendanz, Nealey, Rossetti and Young.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Wylie.

Staff: Nikkole Hughes (786-7156).

Background:

Port districts were authorized in 1911 for the purpose of constructing harbor improvements, developing rail and terminal facilities, and undertaking other industrial improvements. Ports have the authority to develop marine terminals, airports, and other cargo facilities; establish

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foreign trade zones; operate or lease marinas; provide environmental protection and enhancement; and provide public access. Among the general powers granted to ports are the following:

- acquire land, property, leases, and easements;
- condemn property and exercise the power of eminent domain;
- develop lands for industrial and commercial uses;
- impose taxes, rates, and other charges;
- sell or otherwise convey rights to property; and
- construct and maintain specified types of park and recreation facilities.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Joint Select Committee on Washington's Largest Ports.

A Joint Select Committee on Washington's Largest Ports (Committee) is established. The Committee consists of a total of eight legislators. The President of the Senate must appoint the following as committee members:

- the chair and ranking member of the committee on Government Operations and Security; and
- the chair and ranking member of the committee on Trade and Economic Development.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives must appoint the following as committee members:

- the chair and ranking member of the committee on Local Government; and
- the chair and ranking member of the committee on Technology and Economic Development.

The Committee must choose two co-chairs, one from the House of Representatives and one from the Senate.

The Committee must develop recommendations that:

- consider the political, economic, and security issues facing Washington's largest ports;
- promote regulatory consistency and certainty in the areas of land use planning, permitting, and business development in a manner that supports Washington's largest ports;
- encourage cooperation and partnership between local, state, federal, and private sectors to foster increased use of Washington's largest ports; and
- identify aspects of state policy that have an impact on Washington's largest ports.

The Committee must report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2016.

Staff support for the Committee must be provided by Senate Committee Services and the Office of Program Research. Members of the Committee are reimbursed for travel expenses, and the expenses of the Committee must be paid jointly by the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Definitions.

The following definition is established: "Washington's largest ports" means the four port districts in the state that had the highest gross operating revenues in 2015.

Expiration Date.

The bill expires December 1, 2016.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Bill:

The amended bill:

- requires the Speaker of the House of Representatives to appoint the chair and ranking member of the committee on Technology and Economic Development as members of the Committee, rather than the chair and ranking member of the committee on Community Development, Housing, and Tribal Affairs; and
- defines "Washington's largest ports" to mean the four port districts in the state that had the highest gross operating revenues in 2015, which consist of the ports of Seattle, Tacoma, Longview, and Vancouver.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: 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 intent of this bill is to build the profile of ports in Washington, which are essential to the state's economy. The Committee should have groups come in and compile data for the Legislature to examine how the state's ports are going to stay internationally competitive.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Roach, prime sponsor; and Gordon Baxter, International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.