

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6631

As of February 2, 2016

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: Government Operations & Security:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

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 handling facilities; establish 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:

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

A port district is governed by a three-member board of commissioners elected to staggered six- or four-year terms of office, with one commissioner being elected in each odd-year general election. Voters of a port district with a population of 500,000 or more may authorize the size of the board of commissioners to be increased to five members.

Periodically, the Legislature creates statutory taskforces to focus on topics of current interest. A legislative task force may meet with topic experts, provide opportunities for public testimony, and provide recommendations on statutory or other changes. Recent statutory task

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forces include the Joint Legislative Task Force on the Economic Resilience of Maritime and Manufacturing in Washington, and the Legislative Task Force on School Siting.

Summary of Bill: A Joint Select Committee on Washington's Largest Ports (Joint Select Committee) is established. The Joint Select Committee is comprised of eight legislators:

- the chair and ranking member of the Senate Government Operations & Security Committee;
- the chair and ranking member of the Senate Trade and Economic Development Committee;
- the chair and ranking member of the House Local Government Committee; and
- the chair and ranking member of the House Community Development, Housing, and Tribal Affairs Committee.

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

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

The Joint Select Committee must report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2016. The Joint Select Committee expires on December 1, 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

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