
Transportation Committee

HB 1782

Brief Description: Addressing the operating and maintenance deficit of the Wahkiakum county ferry.

Sponsors: Representatives McEntire and Fey.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases state support of the Wahkiakum county ferry service to 85 percent of the operating deficit.
- Removes the restriction that reimbursement may not exceed amounts appropriated for the biennium.

Hearing Date: 2/15/23

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7140).

Background:

Any county may construct, operate and maintain ferries within the county or between counties. For counties operating ferry service under this general authority, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) may reimburse for a portion of the deficit incurred while operating a county ferry service. Currently Pierce, Skagit, Wahkiakum and Whatcom Counties operate ferries under this general authority.

For Wahkiakum County's ferry service, the WSDOT is authorized to enter into a continuing agreement to pay for 80 percent of the operating deficit for the preceding fiscal year of the ferry service, with a maximum not to exceed the amount appropriated for the biennium. Funds must be used for the operation and maintenance of the Puget Island ferry. Fares established by the County must be comparable to those on similar runs listed on the state ferry schedule.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The continuing agreement between the WSDOT and Wahkiakum county must provide for payment of 85 percent of the operating deficit of the County's ferry service. The restriction that reimbursement may not exceed amounts appropriated for the biennium is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.