
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1923

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By House Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Nance, Berry, Fitzgibbon, Simmons, Richards, Thomas, Scott, Parshley, Pollet, Shavers, and Davis)

READ FIRST TIME 02/28/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing the availability of passenger-only
2 ferries by establishing the mosquito fleet act; amending RCW
3 36.57A.222; creating new sections; providing an effective date; and
4 declaring an emergency.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Passenger-only ferry service is the
7 fastest way to get boats on the water and build the capacity
8 necessary to respond to Washington state ferries' service
9 disruptions, which will alleviate the negative impacts that those
10 disruptions and cancellations have on the people of Washington state.
11 Increased passenger-only ferry service will also ensure reliable
12 access to health care, education, and work for communities that are
13 dependent on ferry service.

14 Bolstering passenger-only ferry capacity ahead of the FIFA world
15 cup will help to ensure its success and bridge the gap in ferry
16 capacity before the next Washington state ferries procurement cycle
17 puts boats in the water. This will help tourism-dependent small
18 businesses across the state, while honoring our state's commitment to
19 environmental progress and helping Washingtonians travel and connect
20 without driving. Increased passenger-only ferry service will also
21 support workforce development, by creating a workforce pipeline of

1 hard-working mariners who can upgrade their licenses to take on
2 larger vessels, including Washington state ferries and private sector
3 opportunities.

4 The legislature, therefore, finds that additional passenger-only
5 ferry service is necessary in order to improve the lives of all
6 Washingtonians, while also honoring Washington's maritime heritage
7 and the original mosquito fleet that helped build the Washington we
8 love.

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 36.57A.222 and 2015 3rd sp.s. c 44 s 313 are each
10 amended to read as follows:

11 (1) A governing body of a county under Title 36 RCW, a port
12 district under Title 53 RCW, a public transportation benefit area~~((~~
13 ~~located in a county that only borders the western side of Puget Sound~~
14 ~~with a population of more than two hundred thousand and contains one~~
15 ~~or more Washington state ferries terminals))~~ under chapter 36.57A
16 RCW, a city transit system under RCW 35.58.2721, a county
17 transportation authority under chapter 36.57 RCW, a metropolitan
18 municipal corporation transit system under chapter 36.56 RCW, an
19 unincorporated transportation benefit area under RCW 36.57.100, or a
20 regional transit authority under chapter 81.112 RCW, that borders or
21 contains a navigable body of water, may establish one or more
22 passenger-only ferry service districts within all or a portion of the
23 boundaries of the ~~((public transportation benefit area))~~ entity
24 establishing the passenger-only ferry service district. A passenger-
25 only ferry service district may include all or a portion of a city or
26 town as long as all or a portion of the city or town boundaries are
27 within the boundaries of the establishing ~~((public transportation~~
28 ~~benefit area))~~ entity. The members of the ~~((public transportation~~
29 ~~benefit area))~~ governing body of the entity proposing to establish
30 the passenger-only ferry service district, acting ex officio and
31 independently, constitutes the governing body of the passenger-only
32 ferry service district.

33 (2) A passenger-only ferry service district may establish,
34 finance, and provide passenger-only ferry service, and associated
35 services to support and augment passenger-only ferry service
36 operation, within its boundaries in the same manner as authorized for
37 ~~((public transportation benefit areas under this chapter))~~ the entity
38 establishing the district.

1 (3) A passenger-only ferry service district constitutes a body
2 corporate and possesses all the usual powers of a corporation for
3 public purposes as well as all other powers that may be conferred by
4 statute including, but not limited to, the authority to hire
5 employees, staff, and services, to enter into contracts, to acquire,
6 hold, and dispose of real and personal property, and to sue and be
7 sued. Public works contract limits applicable to the (~~public~~
8 ~~transportation benefit area~~) entity that established the passenger-
9 only ferry service district apply to the district. For purposes of
10 this section, "passenger-only ferry service district" means a quasi-
11 municipal corporation and independent taxing authority within the
12 meaning of Article VII, section 1 of the state Constitution, and a
13 taxing district within the meaning of Article VII, section 2 of the
14 state Constitution, created by the (~~legislative~~) governing body of
15 a county under Title 36 RCW, a port district under Title 53 RCW, a
16 public transportation benefit area under chapter 36.57A RCW, a city
17 transit system under RCW 35.58.2721, a county transportation
18 authority under chapter 36.57 RCW, a metropolitan municipal
19 corporation transit system under chapter 36.56 RCW, an unincorporated
20 transportation benefit area under RCW 36.57.100, or a regional
21 transit authority under chapter 81.112 RCW.

22 (4) Before a passenger-only ferry service district may provide
23 passenger-only ferry service, it must develop a passenger-only ferry
24 investment plan, including elements: To operate or contract for the
25 operation of passenger-only ferry services; to purchase, lease, or
26 rent ferry vessels and dock facilities for the provision of transit
27 service; and to identify other activities necessary to implement the
28 plan. The plan must set forth terminal locations to be served,
29 projected costs of providing services, and revenues to be generated
30 from tolls, locally collected tax revenues, and other revenue
31 sources. The plan must ensure that services provided under the plan
32 are for the benefit of the residents of the passenger-only ferry
33 service district. The passenger-only ferry service district may use
34 any of its powers to carry out this purpose, unless otherwise
35 prohibited by law. In addition, the passenger-only ferry service
36 district may enter into: Contracts and agreements to operate
37 passenger-only ferry service; public-private partnerships; and
38 design-build, general contractor/construction management, or other
39 alternative procurement processes substantially consistent with
40 chapter 39.10 RCW.

1 (5) A passenger-only ferry service district may be dissolved by a
2 majority vote of the governing body when all obligations under any
3 general obligation bonds issued by the passenger-only ferry service
4 district have been discharged and any other contractual obligations
5 of the passenger-only ferry service district have either been
6 discharged or assumed by another governmental entity.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act may be known and cited as the
8 mosquito fleet act.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act is necessary for the immediate
10 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
11 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
12 effect July 1, 2025.

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