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**Commerce & Labor Committee**

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**SB 6815**

**Brief Description:** Concerning health care benefits for marine employees of the department of transportation.

**Sponsors:** Senator Haugen; by request of Office of Financial Management.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires that bargaining representatives for ferry employees negotiate for state contributions for health benefits as part of the coalition of other state employee bargaining representatives, and may no longer bargain separately for health care benefits.

**Hearing Date:** 2/17/10

**Staff:** Alison Hellberg (786-7152).

**Background:**

Representatives of ferry workers in the Marine Transportation Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), who are members of a collective bargaining unit represented by a ferry employee organization, bargain over wages, hours, working conditions, insurance, and health care benefits. The employer, for purposes of bargaining with the collective bargaining representative of ferry workers, is the state of Washington. By statute, the WSDOT is required, unless a bargaining agreement provides otherwise, to provide insurance and health care plans as determined by the Washington State Health Care Authority. Employer contributions may exceed those for other state employees, subject to certain limits.

If an agreement has not been reached after a reasonable period of negotiations, all impasse items must be submitted to interest arbitration.

The state also collectively bargains with the representatives of state agency employee organizations. The matters subject to bargaining include wages, hours, and other terms of

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employment, and the negotiation of any question arising under a collective bargaining agreement. Health care benefits or other insurance benefits are not required to be bargained, except that the dollar amount expended on behalf of each employee for health care benefits is subject to bargaining. Negotiations for the amount of these contributions is conducted between the state and a coalition of all of the bargaining representatives of employees of state agencies. Any provision agreed to by the state and the coalition must be included in all master collective bargaining agreements.

**Summary of Bill:**

The bargaining representatives of WSDOT ferry employees may no longer bargain for health care plans and must negotiate for state contributions for health benefits as a part of the coalition of other state employee bargaining representatives. Health care benefits are not subject to interest arbitration.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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