

State of Washington Marine Employees' Commission Fact Sheet

Background

The Marine Employees' Commission (MEC) was established by the Washington State Legislature in 1983 and operates under Chapter 47.64 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Title 316 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). These codes state the MEC is to ensure the operation of the ferry system is not disrupted by labor disputes, by providing the specialized attention required to resolve the unique and complex labor relations questions that arise in the operation of the WSF system.

The Washington State Ferry (WSF) System is the nation's largest ferry fleet, consisting of 23 vessels and 20 ferry terminals. WSF carries more than 23 million passengers each year and more than 11 million vehicles. The system operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Not only do these ferries operate in the state of Washington, but they sail to British Columbia, Canada, as well. Thousands of commuters, employers, students, and commercial shippers depend on WSF every day for safe, reliable transportation across the Sound.

Purpose

The MEC has a long history of working with ferry employees and management. The **purpose** of the Marine Employees' Commission is to:

- ◆ **Adjust** all complaints, grievances and disputes between ferry labor and management
- ◆ **Certify issues** for arbitration when parties remain at impasse
- ◆ **Investigate** charges of unfair labor practices
- ◆ **Determine** bargaining units
- ◆ **Certify** fair representation organizations



Goal

The MEC's **goal** is to quickly resolve the labor relations questions arising in the operation of the WSF System. This is done through the following activities:

- ◆ Commission members are trained as administrative law judges and hold **settlement conferences and hearings** to resolve in a timely fashion often complex disputes in which parties allege violations of the contract or the law.
- ◆ The MEC holds **monthly public meetings** with labor and management, providing a neutral forum for on-going dialogue on labor relations. Guests are welcome and frequently attend.
- ◆ The Commission also participates in **other collective bargaining roles**, including certification of issues for arbitration when the parties remain at impasse.

Commission Members, Staff

John R. Swanson—Chairman
Public Member; term expires 6/15/13

John M. Cox—Commissioner
Industry member; term expires 6/15/12

Vacant—Commissioner
Labor member, term expires 6/15/11

Linda Hoverter—Special Assistant

Kathy Marshall—Administrative Assistant/
Administrator

The Commissioners are appointed by the Governor of the State of Washington and are confirmed by the Washington State Senate.

For more information, call us at (360) 586-6354, e-mail us at mec@olywa.net, or visit our web site at www.marineempcom.org.