

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1630

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to study and report on existing ferry operations and potential ferry routes in the United States, to authorize the Secretary to provide financial assistance for the development of ferry operations, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 15, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. DICKS, and Mr. JONES) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to study and report on existing ferry operations and potential ferry routes in the United States, to authorize the Secretary to provide financial assistance for the development of ferry operations, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Ferry Intermodal
5 Transportation Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FERRIES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Today's ferries are a critical transportation
2 component in many communities, providing vital
3 transportation services for passengers, automobiles,
4 buses, and trucks in locations where practical alter-
5 natives are insufficient or do not exist.

6 (2) Ferries provide alternatives to other trans-
7 port modes that are facing severe capacity con-
8 straints.

9 (3) Ferries do not require the construction of
10 costly infrastructure such as roads, bridges, or tun-
11 nels, thereby reducing environmental impacts, cap-
12 ital investment, and the time required to begin oper-
13 ation.

14 (4) Ferries reduce single-occupancy vehicle traf-
15 fic, thereby reducing traffic congestion, air pollution,
16 and energy use.

17 (5) Ferries are flexible because vessels and
18 some loading facilities may be shifted to new loca-
19 tions to respond to changes in demand or in times
20 of national emergency.

21 (6) Joint efforts by private operators and local
22 governments already have resulted in highly innova-
23 tive and successful ferry operations in many urban
24 areas.

1 (7) The Department of Transportation strategic
2 plan for the National Transportation System urges
3 emphasis on those modes of transportation that pro-
4 mote those interests “of critical importance to our
5 country, including clean air, reducing energy con-
6 sumption and safe, comfortable, and cost effective
7 transportation” goals that ferry transportation em-
8 bodies.

9 (8) Ferry transportation is an important and
10 unique component of the national transportation sys-
11 tem which should be encouraged and supported in
12 those communities for which it is applicable.

13 (b) STUDY.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transpor-
15 tation shall conduct a study of ferry transportation
16 in the United States and its possessions—

17 (A) to identify existing ferry operations, in-
18 cluding—

19 (i) the locations and routes served;

20 (ii) the name, the United States offi-
21 cial number, and a description of each ves-
22 sel operated as a ferry;

23 (iii) the source and amount, if any, of
24 funds derived from Federal, State, or local

government sources supporting ferry operations; and

(iv) the impact of ferry transportation on local and regional economies; and

(B) to identify potential domestic ferry routes in the United States and its possessions and to develop information on those routes, including—

(i) locations and routes that might be served;

(ii) estimates of capacity required;

(iii) estimates of capital costs of developing those routes;

(iv) estimates of annual operating costs for these routes;

(v) estimates of the economic impact of these routes on local and regional economies; and

(vi) the potential for use of high speed ferry services.

(2) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit a report on the results of the study required under subsection (a) to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and

1 the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Trans-
2 portation of the Senate.

3 (c) MEETING WITH STATE METROPOLITAN PLAN-
4 NING ORGANIZATIONS.—After submitting the report re-
5 quired by subsection (b), the Secretary of Transportation
6 shall—

7 (1) meet with the chief metropolitan planning
8 organization officer of each metropolitan area in
9 which a ferry service is operated or for which a po-
10 tential ferry route is identified in the report; and

11 (2) in that meeting discuss the results of the
12 study under subsection (a) and availability of re-
13 sources, both Federal and State, for providing ferry
14 services.

15 (d) FUNDING.—Section 1064(c) of the Intermodal
16 Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (23 U.S.C.
17 129 note) is amended to read as follows:

18 “(c) AUTHORIZATION.—There shall be available, out
19 of the Highway Trust Fund (other than the Mass Transit
20 Account), to the Secretary for obligation at the discretion
21 of the Secretary, \$18,000,000 for each of the fiscal years
22 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 in carrying out this
23 section. Such sums shall remain available until ex-
24 pended.”.

1 (e) FERRY OPERATING AND LEASING AMEND-
2 MENTS.—

3 (1) FACILITATION OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP
4 AND LEASING.—Section 129(c) of title 23, United
5 States Code, is amended—

6 (A) in paragraph (3) by striking “owned.”
7 and inserting “owned or operated.”; and

8 (B) in paragraph (6), by striking “sold,
9 leased, or” and inserting “sold or”.

10 (2) DOCUMENTATION; CITIZENSHIP OF MEM-
11 BERS OF OWNER ENTITIES.—Section 12102(d)(1) of
12 title 46, United States Code, is amended by insert-
13 ing “or the issuance of any certificate of documenta-
14 tion for a small passenger vessel, a passenger vessel,
15 or a ferry,” after “endorsement,”.

16 (f) LOAN GUARANTEES.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transpor-
18 tation may guarantee, or make a commitment to
19 guarantee, the payment of the principal of, and the
20 interest on, an obligation for ferry operations in the
21 transportation of passengers or passengers and vehi-
22 cles in the United States and its possessions. A
23 guarantee or commitment under this subsection shall
24 be made—

1 (A) under standards and requirements
2 equivalent to those under title XI of the Mer-
3 chant Marine Act, 1936 (46 App. U.S.C. 1271
4 et seq.); and

5 (B) subject to such terms as the Secretary
6 may require.

7 (2) SIMPLIFIED PROCESS.—A guarantee or
8 commitment made under this subsection is subject
9 to all laws, requirements, and procedures applicable
10 to guarantees or commitments made under title XI
11 of that Act, except the Secretary shall by rule pro-
12 vide a simplified application and compliance process
13 for guarantees and commitments made under this
14 subsection.

15 (3) AUTHORIZATION.—There is authorized to
16 be appropriated to carry out this subsection
17 \$7,000,000 for each of fiscal years 1998, 1999,
18 2000, 2001, and 2002.

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