

# Marine Employees' Commission

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Agency Type: Adjudicatory (*hearing and settling cases by judicial procedure*)  
Authorizing Statutes: RCW 47.64, WAC 316

## Agency Responsibilities

- ◆ **Adjudicate** all complaints, grievances and disputes between labor and management arising from Washington State Ferry operations
- ◆ Provide impasse **mediation**
- ◆ **Investigate** charges of unfair labor practices
- ◆ **Determine** bargaining units
- ◆ **Conduct** fact-finding studies and salary surveys
- ◆ **Provide** for the selection of impartial arbitrators
- ◆ **Certify** fair representation organizations
- ◆ **Determine** whether labor agreements exceed statutory limitations and order reductions accordingly

## Organization Chart and Budget

**Five employees:** John R. Swanson, Commission Chair – Public (Maritime Member)  
John P. Sullivan, Commissioner — Industry Member  
John R. Byrne, Commissioner — Labor Member  
Kathy J. Marshall, Administrative Assistant/Administrator  
Linda J. Hoverter, Special Assistant—Dispute Management

Commission holds monthly public meetings

**FTE:** 2.3  
**2003-05 Budget:** \$372,000  
**Budget source:** Fund 109 – Puget Sound Ferry Operations

## Most Pressing Issues or Challenges

### 1. Soaring Caseload

**Issue:** Number of cases filed before the Commission has increased 174% in the last five years  
**Problem:** Pressure on the ferry system and its workers is enormous, due to extremely tight budgets and frustrated ambitions

**Key players/stakeholders:** Washington State Ferry System and 13 Associated Unions  
Washington State Ferry System Labor Relations Manager  
Washington State Ferry System Assistant Attorney General  
Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific Regional Director  
International Order of Masters, Mates & Pilots Union Representative  
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association Union Representative  
Metal Trades Association Union Representative  
Office & Professional Employees International Union Representative

**Urgency:** Mediation is critical to help the parties avoid real impasse or worse

**Current status:** Commission is working to stabilize the situation through mediation

**Timeline for resolution:** June 2005

## 2. Increasing Expenses/Flat Budget

**Issue:** Fees and charges from other state agencies constantly increase. In addition, Commission's workload has increased 174%.

**Problem:** Commission has no way to raise revenue. Carry Forward Budget presumes a workload of 20 disputes, but Commission is now averaging 52 disputes per year and predicting 70. Fixed costs have risen to 93% of available budget, leaving only 7% discretionary

**Key players/stakeholders:** Office of Financial Management  
Attorney General's Office  
General Administration  
Governor's Office  
Legislature

**Urgency:** Immediate

**Current status:** Decision packages were submitted to Office of Financial Management

**Timeline for resolution:** End of 2005 Legislative session

## 3. Replacing outgoing Commissioners

**Issue:** Commissioners are part-time and paid only \$100 per day (RCW 43.03.250)

**Problem:** Two-part: A) Finding any qualified candidates; B) Governor's Office requirement of 3 names for nomination

**Key players/stakeholders:** Governor's Office Boards and Commissions Assistant,  
Washington State Ferry System and 13 Unions

**Urgency:** Often have only 2-4 weeks notice when a Commissioner resigns

**Current status:** Commissioner representing labor resigned effective July 29; only 1 candidate applied; Governor's Office is working to secure additional candidates; caseload is backing up and performance measures are suffering

**Timeline for resolution:** 8/2/04

## 4. Underpaid staff

**Issue:** No merit increases for 4 years

**Problem:** Merit increases have been postponed due to budget pressures

**Key players/stakeholders:** Exempt staff -- also exempt from collective bargaining

**Urgency:** Staff have been working under huge caseloads without merit increases

**Current status:** Staff morale is low due to working under dramatically increased caseloads without merit increases for 4 years; currently 10% behind equivalent positions

**Timeline for resolution:** End of 2005 Legislative session

## Board Member Listing by Board Position

### MARINE EMPLOYEES' COMMISSION (TS075)

Agency 408 - Marine Employees' Commission	Senate Conf. Y	Positions: Maximum 003
Authority Governor	Public Disc. N	Minimum 000
Authoriztn. RCW 47.64.280	Term Length 060	Actual 003
Rem. Auth. GC	Meetings/Yr. 48	

Pos. #	Name and Address	Status	Race	Appointed	Expires
001	VACANT				06/15/2006
			Position a member		
			Comments Labor		

Pos. #	Name and Address	Status	Race	Appointed	Expires
002	Sullivan, John P. The Carlyle, Suite Two 1308 Bellevue Way NE Bellevue, WA 98004-3682	A	C	06/16/2002	06/15/2007
		Terms Served 02			
			Position a member		
			Comments Industry		

Pos. #	Name and Address	Status	Race	Appointed	Expires
003	Swanson, John 1415- 170th Place NE Bellevue, WA 98008	A	C	10/10/2003	06/15/2008
		Terms Served 01			
			Position Chair		
			Comments Maritime Knowledge		