

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6000

As Reported By House Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks

Title: An act relating to abandoned vessels.

Brief Description: Authorizing public agencies to secure abandoned vessels at public facilities.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Talmadge, Winsley and Oke; by request of Parks and Recreation Commission.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks, February 25, 1994, DPA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Pruitt, Chair; R. Johnson, Vice Chair; Stevens, Ranking Minority Member; McMorris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dunshee; Linville; Schoesler; Sheldon; B. Thomas; Valle and Wolfe.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: The Parks and Recreation Commission manages numerous marine facilities used by boaters. Some vessel owners have abandoned their vessels at park facilities. Others have left their vessels at park facilities for much longer than allowed and have failed to pay the required moorage charges. Sometimes these abandoned vessels and vessels left without authorization have sunk or resulted in gasoline or oil discharges into marine waters. Commonly, they have interfered with the public's use of state parks. The commission has met with serious difficulties in providing for the removal of these problem vessels.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Parks and Recreation Commission is authorized to "secure" vessels located on park property that are on the property without authorization; present a nuisance or threat to the environment, public health or park property; or are in danger of sinking.

The commission is authorized to hold a "secured" vessel until the vessel owner makes arrangements with the commission for the vessel's removal and pays the commission

its charges for securing the vessel, back moorage fees, and other amounts owed. However, if the vessel is not claimed within a certain period, the vessel is considered abandoned and the commission is authorized to sell it to the highest bidder at a public sale. The commission must provide detailed notices of vessel securing and sale.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amendment provides definitions for key terms; clarifies the notice provisions; specifies what personal property can be sold at an abandoned vessel sale; permits the commission to recover its moorage charges from the sale proceeds; and clarifies the rights of the commission if there are no buyers at an abandoned vessel sale.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The problems described to the committee earlier regarding abandoned vessels at state park facilities persist. More vessels have been abandoned just since the committee considered the House bill. The commission is incurring costs which it cannot recover.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Russ Cahill, State Parks and Recreation Commission (pro); and Trevor Sandison, Washington Bankers Association.