

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5179

C 469 L 93

SYNOPSIS AS ENACTED

Brief Description: Promoting vessel safety.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Ecology & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Owen, Barr, Fraser, Rinehart and Sutherland)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

BACKGROUND:

Washington statutes provide safety requirements for the operation of vessels. These include the manner of operation, running lights, noise control, life preservers, accident reporting, life saving equipment, and other requirements.

However, there are no requirements in existing law that vessels having appliances or heating systems fueled by propane be equipped with devices to warn of propane leaks. Propane fuel in its gaseous state is heavier than air and a propane fuel leak in a vessel may lead to a buildup of flammable gases in the hold of the vessel. Such leaks have been the cause of vessel explosions on Washington waters, resulting in loss of life and property damage.

Monitoring devices to detect and warn of propane fuel leaks on vessels are widely available through marine suppliers.

SUMMARY:

Legislative findings are made regarding the large number of recreational vessels in Washington State and the need for sensing and warning devices regarding liquid petroleum gas leaks. Effective July 1, 1994, recreational vessels required to be registered in the state with liquid petroleum gas systems shall be equipped with a device to warn of vapor leaks below the threshold danger of explosion. The State Parks and Recreation Commission is to adopt rules exempting vessels of open-air construction. The United States Coast Guard is requested to adopt standards governing the installation of such devices. The Parks Commission will adopt rules to provide such standards if it determines the Coast Guard is not reasonably likely to adopt standards by April 1, 1994.

Vessels offered for sale or manufactured within the state on or after July 1, 1994 shall be equipped with such warning devices. Vessels shall not be modified in any way that causes

a vessel to be out of compliance with the warning device requirements.

Penalties for violations are specified. Until September 1, 1994, only warning notices of violations shall be issued. If a court holds any provision of the state law to be preempted by federal law, the commission shall submit the state provision to the federal government for an exemption to the preemption pursuant to federal law.

A severability provision is included.

VOTES ON FINAL PASSAGE:

Senate	47	0	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	40	0	(Senate concurred)

EFFECTIVE: May 17, 1993