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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4012

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State of Washington

54th Legislature

1996 Regular Session

By Representatives Stevens, Cairnes, Elliot, Thompson, Koster, Sheahan, D. Schmidt, Delvin, McMorris, Robertson and Mielke

Read first time 01/26/95. Referred to Committee on Energy & Utilities.

1 TO THE HONORABLE BILL CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND  
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
6 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
7 represent and petition as follows:

8 WHEREAS, The COSPAS (Cosmicheskaya Sistyema Poiska Avariynych Sudov  
9 -- Space System for Search of Distressed Vessels) - SARSAT (Search and  
10 Rescue Satellite Aided Tracking) Satellite System was implemented in  
11 1982 through the joint efforts of the United States, Canada, and France  
12 (SARSAT) and the former Soviet Union (COSPAS); and

13 WHEREAS, This satellite system was conceived in a humanitarian  
14 fashion to provide improved safety in remote areas using satellite  
15 technology to aid detection and location of people involved in distress  
16 situations; and

17 WHEREAS, The COSPAS-SARSAT system in concept provides the same  
18 protection to those who travel by land, sea, and air; and

19 WHEREAS, The SARSAT program is managed in the United States by the  
20 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, SARSAT Operations  
21 Division; and

1       WHEREAS, The use in the United States of distress beacons operating  
2 in the international COSPAS-SARSAT Satellite System is currently  
3 restricted by federal regulation to marine (Emergency Position  
4 Indicating Radio Beacons) and aviation (Emergency Locator Transmitter)  
5 applications; and

6       WHEREAS, The value of the devices for the land-mobile user  
7 (Personal Locator Beacons) to safeguard lone workers, travellers, and  
8 recreationalists in the United States can be clearly demonstrated; and

9       WHEREAS, The use of Personal Locator Beacons has been permitted in  
10 Canada since July 1990, and United States citizens have been required  
11 through lack of availability of the devices to obtain them from Canada;  
12 and

13       WHEREAS, An experimental Personal Locator Beacon program has been  
14 ongoing in the North Slope Borough, Alaska, since March 1992, with  
15 unqualified success; and

16       WHEREAS, The Personal Locator Beacon program in Alaska was expanded  
17 in 1994 to a state-wide controlled program; and

18       WHEREAS, Similar controlled programs have been authorized for the  
19 Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the United States Department of  
20 Interior (Fish and Wildlife Service), the United States Coast Guard,  
21 the Naval Support Forces Antarctica, and the National Science  
22 Foundation; and

23       WHEREAS, State Patrol, local police, and fire fighters engaging in  
24 rescues would be aided in their efforts if such programs were  
25 authorized;

26       NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectively submit:

27       (1) That the use of Personal Locator Beacons be permitted in the  
28 State of Washington as well as the remaining states of these United  
29 States;

30       (2) That the Federal Communications Commission expediently process  
31 rules regarding the use of 406 MHz Personal Locator Beacons;

32       (3) That the necessary standards for approval of Personal Locator  
33 Beacons through Equipment Authorizations granted by the Federal  
34 Communications Commission be issued expediently;

35       (4) That the approval process for the approval of Personal Locator  
36 Beacons be published and that the approval agency be so named;

37       (5) That the process to register Personal Locator Beacons with the  
38 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National  
39 Environmental Satellite, Data, Information Service be formalized; and

1           (6) That the necessary state Search and Rescue Points of Contact be  
2 established within each state to allow the distribution of alert data  
3 to the state agency responsible for land search and rescue.

4           BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
5 transmitted to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United  
6 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the  
7 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of  
8 Washington.

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