

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5483

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Natural Resources & Parks, February 25, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to licensing whitewater river outfitters.

**Brief Description:** Licensing whitewater river outfitters.

**Sponsors:** Senators Johnson, Oke, Snyder, Prentice, Kohl, Rossi, Spanel, Swecker and Schow.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources & Parks: 2/13/97, 2/25/97 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5483 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Jacobsen, Morton, Prentice, Roach, Snyder, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

**Staff:** Ross Antipa (786-7413)

**Background:** Whitewater river outfitters and guides may register with the Department of Licensing. A whitewater outfitter and guide licensing program with minimum age, training and licensing requirements would provide for a more tightly regulated whitewater rafting industry.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** A whitewater river outfitters license is created. Persons who operate as whitewater outfitters must be licensed, hire trained guides, carry sufficient insurance, and comply with equipment and training requirements established in statute.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The ad hoc advisory committee is removed from the bill. The Parks and Recreation Commission no longer specifies training requirements. The liability waiver for outfitters is eliminated. Fishing guides are excluded from regulation as outfitters.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 3, 1997.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill passed; sections 2, 4, 7 and 8 (licensing and training requirements) take effect January 1, 1998.

**Testimony For:** Whitewater outfitters and guides operate a dangerous business that needs more regulation to protect public safety.

**Testimony Against:** Legislation will over-regulate the whitewater outfitter industry and not prevent bad operators from endangering clients.

**Testified:** Charles VanGorder, VanGorder Law Offices (con); Gerald Michalec, North Cascade River Expeditions PROW (con); Dave Ribacchi, river guide (con); Paul Spence, Reachout Expeditions (con); Bradley D. Sarver, Blue Sky Outfitters, (con); Jeremy Freeland, Orion Expeditions (con); Jim Behla, River Riders (con); David King, Olympic Raft & Guide (con); Chris Jonason, Wave Trek (con); Brian, Barbara Brunner (pro); Linda Hall (pro); Paul Green, EWU (pro); James Moore, Orion Expeditions (con); Lori Michalec, North Cascades River Expeditions (con); Allan Kearney, Wild & Scenic, Inc. (con); Cleve Pinnix, State Parks (pro); Lynda Myra, PROW/Rivers, Inc. (con); Jerry Redell, Redline River Adventures (con); Rich Adams, Racing River Outfitters (con).