

Agriculture & Ecology Committee

SJM 8004

Brief Description: *Petitioning Congress to appropriate support for an oil spill prevention tugboat in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.*

Sponsors: *By Senators Spanel, Swecker, Patterson, Hargrove, Costa, Eide, Fraser, Thibaudeau, Franklin, Regala, Gardner, Prentice, Kline, Kohl-Welles and Haugen.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Petitions the United States Congress to appropriate funds to support a permanently stationed oil spill prevention tugboat in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.*

Hearing Date: *3/22/01*

Staff: *Jason Callahan (786-7117).*

Background:

The 2000 supplemental budget appropriated \$1.65 million to the Department of Ecology (DOE) to fund an oil spill prevention rescue tugboat in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The tug Barbara Foss was commissioned and began duty at Neah Bay on September 18, 2000. It is scheduled to remain on site throughout the winter storm season. The Neah Bay rescue tug has been called eight times over the current and last two winter seasons, actively towing or escorting five vessels.

The North Puget Sound Long-Term Oil Spill Risk Management Panel, which met monthly from September 1999 to July 2000 to develop an oil spill risk management plan, considered the costs and benefits of a permanently stationed, federally funded rescue tug at Neah Bay. Three-fourths of the panel members voted in support of the tug; however, it was not included in the final recommendations because panel ground rules required a consensus of the members to endorse a proposal. The tug proposal received four "nay" votes, so it did not pass.

Under the existing situation, the tug will end its duty on May 18, 2001. The annual cost of a permanent rescue tug has been estimated by the DOE to be approximately \$3 million.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington State Senate and House of Representatives requests the United States Congress to appropriate sufficient funds to support a permanently stationed oil spill prevention tugboat at the westward end of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.