

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5407

As Passed Senate, May 21, 2001

Title: An act relating to changing provisions relating to the import of simulcast horse races from out-of-state racing facilities to class 1 racing associations' live racing facilities.

Brief Description: Allowing more simulcast horse racing.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions (originally sponsored by Senators West, Prentice, Kohl-Welles, Gardner and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions: 2/15/01, 2/23/01 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/9/01, 31-17.

First Special Session: Passed Senate: 5/21/01, 32-9.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5407 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Benton, Franklin, Honeyford, Patterson, Rasmussen, Regala, West and Winsley.

Staff: Catherine Mele (786-7470)

Background: A class 1 racing association (race track) may import simulcast racing programs from out-of state racing facilities if approved by the Washington State Horse Racing Commission. The number and frequency of imported simulcast programs depends upon whether the race track offers live horse racing or whether the live horse racing season has ended.

During the racing season, a class 1 racing association may open for wagering for up to five days. On the days that the race track conducts live racing during this five day period, it may import no more than one simulcast program per day from out-of-state racing facilities. Generally, one simulcast program contains eight to ten races that viewers watch via satellite on television monitors between live races. The Horse Racing Commission may also provide special approval of one imported out-of-state race of regional and national interest on each live race day. For up to two days per week (out of the five possible open days) when the race track does not offer live racing, it may import two simulcast programs from out-of-state racing facilities. When the live racing season ends, the race track may import simulcast programs five days per week from out-of-state racing facilities. The Horse Racing Commission must approve parimutuel wagering at class 1 racing facilities and simulcast parimutuel wagering for imported simulcast programs.

Summary of Bill: The provisions that govern when and how often a class 1 racing association may import simulcast programs from out-of-state racing facilities during live race meets are deleted.

Legislative intent states that the bill preserves, restores, and revitalizes the equine breeding and racing industries. It is clarified that new forms of gambling are not established beyond what the state authorized previously.

If a state or federal court finds that the bill expands gambling beyond that which the state currently authorizes, then the bill becomes null and void. If a court invalidates any provision of the bill, then the entire bill and its application to any person or circumstance also becomes invalid.

A licensee conducting simulcasting must place signs regarding problem and pathological gambling as provided by current law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: We have competition next to us in Idaho. Folks are traveling across the border to place bets on the days that we do not offer as much simulcasting. In November and December our live racing is down and folks leave to go to other venues. This will help Playfair and the horsemen earn more revenue. We agree with the bill if it is amended. We want to bring simulcast racing to tribal casinos.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Steve Wehrly, Muckleshoot (amend); Dawn Vyvyan, Swinomish Tribe (amend); Ted Martin, Playfair Racing (pro); Bruce Wagar, Lilac Racing (pro).