

FINAL BILL REPORT

SJM 8004

As Passed Legislature

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

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

Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Water
House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology

Background: The Strait of Juan de Fuca covers the marine waters located between the state of Washington and Canada. The marine vessel traffic through the strait is projected, by the United States Coast Guard, to increase in volume by 50 percent from the year 2000 to the year 2025. Additionally, the volume of petroleum transported in the region is projected to increase substantially in the near future. The growth in commercial vessel transits and the increased petroleum movement increases the risk of an oil spill in this region.

The federal government is recognized as having many interests in these marine waters. Those interests include: the international relationship with Canada, the trustee responsibility related to the Olympic National Marine Sanctuary and the Olympic National Park, the protection of tribal treaty rights, the federally designated threatened and endangered species, the federal use of the waters for its naval operations, and the stabilization of the energy resources for the western states.

At the present time, there is a rescue tugboat stationed in Neah Bay, at the western end of the strait, for the purpose of oil spill prevention. At the present time the tugboat is funded solely by Washington State and is projected to be in service for approximately 200 days, starting September 15, 2001.

It is suggested that the federal government should share the expense of stationing an oil spill prevention tugboat in these waters.

Summary: Congress is requested to appropriate sufficient money to support a permanently stationed and adequately-sized oil spill prevention tugboat, with rescue, fire fighting, spill response, and lifesaving capabilities, at the westward end of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	44	4
House	88	9