

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6602

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Modifying pilotage act and related provisions.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen and Swecker; by request of Board of Pilotage Commissioners).

Senate Committee on Transportation
House Committee on Transportation

Background: Under current law, the Board of Pilotage Commissioners (Board) must provide for the maintenance of efficient and competent pilotage service on the waters of the Puget Sound pilotage district and the Grays Harbor pilotage district. To this end, the Board examines the proficiency of potential pilots, licenses pilots, enforces the use of pilots, sets pilotage rates, investigates reported accidents involving pilots, keeps records of various matters affecting pilotage, and performs various other duties as required by law.

Summary: Various general statutory provisions regarding the implementation of the Pilotage Act are revised.

Qualifications and Licensing. The following changes are made regarding the qualification and licensing requirements for marine pilots and pilot trainees:

- allows the Board to contract with private or governmental entities, and to consult with active marine pilots, in establishing, administering, and grading marine pilot licensing exams or simulator evaluations;
- clarifies that physical exams are not required until licenses are issued;
- specifies a process to review a pilot applicant's written exams and evaluation exercises to qualify for pilot trainee status; and
- specifies venue on administrative appeals.

Administrative Changes. The following changes are made to certain administrative provisions of the Pilotage Act:

- clarifies the Board's collecting, reporting, and publishing requirements;
- clarifies that the yacht exemption language applies to certain yachts regardless of whether operated only in the Puget Sound and lower British Columbia;
- clarifies provisions regarding the ranking of applicants for entry into the pilot trainee program;
- adds references to "pilot trainees" as a technical change;
- integrates liability limitation language from two different bills enacted during the 2005 session;
- grants civil immunity to pilots, pilot trainees, and Board members regarding communications related to information about certain marine incidents or occurrences, or reports of the performances of pilots or pilot trainees; and

- specifies a reporting process for masters, pilots, or pilot trainees who deviate from the requirements of the Pilotage Act in order to comply with any federal or international law, other state law, or to ensure the safety of the vessel or crew under his or her control.

Pilotage Account. Effective July 1, 2009, the Pilotage Account is redesignated as a nonappropriated account in the custody of the State Treasurer. Expenditures from the account may be made only by the Board or Board's designee, and only for the purposes of the Board as prescribed under the Pilotage Act. Interest earnings in the account remain with the account.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0
House	94	0

Effective: June 12, 2008

July 1, 2009 (Sections 17 - 20)