

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6185

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 3, 2010

Title: An act relating to preserving the maritime heritage of the state of Washington.

Brief Description: Preserving the maritime heritage of the state of Washington.

Sponsors: Senator Hatfield.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/28/10, 2/03/10 [DP-WM, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Ranker, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Hatfield, Stevens and Swecker.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Fraser.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Maritime Historic Restoration and Preservation. When registering a vessel, a person may make a voluntary donation to support the maritime historic restoration and preservation activities of the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport and the Steamer Virginia V Foundation. Donations are placed in the Maritime Historic Restoration and Preservation Account, and the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport and Steamer Virginia V Foundation. Each receive half of the annual donations.

Vessel Excise Tax. Under current law, vessels are generally subject to an excise tax of one-half of 1 percent of the fair market value of a vessel for the privilege of using it on the waters of this state.

Summary of Bill: Maritime Historic Restoration and Preservation. The Washington State Historical Society (Historical Society) must establish a competitive maritime historic restoration and preservation grant program (grant program) and a process to solicit proposals.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

To implement the grant program, the Historical Society must adopt policies governing project eligibility and evaluation criteria.

Under the grant program, the Historical Society must accept, evaluate, and rank grant applications. The Historical Society must develop a prioritized project list and submit the list to the Governor and Legislature as part of the Historical Society's biennial budget request. Qualified applicants include local governments, tribal governments, and nonprofit corporations. The amount of the state funding may not exceed 50 percent of the project's total cost.

Vessel Excise Tax. The excise tax for historic vessels is reduced to one-quarter of 1 percent of the fair market value from one-half of 1 percent. Historic vessels are defined as any vessel at least 60 years old that is only used for participation in club activities, exhibitions, tours, parades, and occasional pleasure boating.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: It is a good idea to move forward with efforts to preserve historical vessels, despite the challenging budget times. The proponents are not asking for funding now, they just want to develop funding criteria and a framework. Historic vessels play an important role for education, job creation, and community building. The Washington State Historical Society is willing to administer the grant program if called upon by the Legislature.

OTHER: Washington State could become the home of the first maritime heritage area in the country.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jim King, Citizens for Parks and Recreation; Catherine Collins, Sound Experience; Betsy Davis, The Center for Wooden Boats; Mike McQuaid, Virginia V Foundation; Carl Seaburg, Sandman Foundation; Les Bolton, Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority; Gary Schaila, Washington State Historical Society.

OTHER: Allyson Brooks, Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation.