

SB 5344-S.E - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Declares that the maritime industry should provide and fully fund at least one year-round emergency response tug at Neah Bay, with necessary logistical and operational support, and that any tug provided by the maritime industry pursuant to the act should meet or exceed technical performance requirements specified in the state's fiscal year 2009 contract for the Neah Bay emergency response tug.

Requires the owner or operator of a covered vessel transiting to or from a Washington port through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, except for transits extending no further west than Race Rocks lights, to establish and fund an emergency response system that provides for an emergency response towing vessel to be stationed at Neah Bay.

Requires an emergency response towing vessel that is a part of the emergency response system required by RCW 88.46.130 to be stationed at Neah Bay and be available to respond to vessel emergencies.

Requires the department of ecology to be authorized to contract with the emergency response towing vessel, at the discretion of the department, in response to a potentially emerging maritime casualty or as a precautionary measure during severe storms.

Requires designated representatives of the owners and operators of all classes of covered vessels to negotiate, given the intent of section 4 of the act, a system to determine the equitable apportionment of costs of the emergency response system required by the act.

Requires the director of the department of ecology, or the director's designee, to initiate discussions with the director's equivalent position in the government for the Canadian province of British Columbia to explore options for Washington and British Columbia to share the marine response assets required under the act. This requirement expires July 31, 2011.

Authorizes the state oil spill response account to be used for costs associated with the department of ecology's use of the emergency response towing vessel.