

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5036

As Reported by House Committee On:
General Government Appropriations & Oversight

Title: An act relating to the derelict vessel and invasive species removal fee.

Brief Description: Regarding the derelict vessel and invasive species removal fee.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Marine Waters (originally sponsored by Senators Regala, Swecker and Fraser; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Ecology).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

General Government Appropriations & Oversight: 3/24/11, 3/28/11 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House)**

- Eliminates the expiration date for the derelict vessel and invasive species removal fee.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS & OVERSIGHT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Hudgins, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; McCune, Ranking Minority Member; Taylor, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Armstrong, Blake, Fitzgibbon, Ladenburg, Moscoso, Pedersen, Van De Wege and Wilcox.

Staff: Owen Rowe (786-7391) and Courtney Barnes (786-7194).

Background:

Vessel Registration Fees.

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.

Generally, no person may own or operate any vessel on the waters of this state unless the vessel has been registered. The current registration fee is \$10.50 per year, which is deposited in the State General Fund.

In addition to the \$10.50 registration fee, a vessel owner must pay other fees, including an annual derelict vessel and invasive species removal fee of \$5. The \$5 fee funds both derelict vessel and invasive species removal programs, and is distributed as follows:

- \$2 is deposited in the Derelict Vessel Removal Account, which is administered by the Department of Natural Resources;
- \$1.50 is deposited in the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Account, which is administered by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW);
- \$1 is deposited in the Freshwater Aquatic Algae Control Account, which is administered by the Department of Ecology (DOE); and
- \$0.50 is deposited in the Aquatic Invasive Species Enforcement Account, which is administered by the Washington State Patrol.

The \$5 fee for derelict vessel and invasive species removal expires on June 30, 2012. On and after June 30, 2012, the fee is \$2 and is deposited in the Derelict Vessel Removal Account.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The expiration date for the \$5 derelict vessel and invasive species removal fee is eliminated. The provision reducing the \$5 fee to \$2 in 2012 is removed.

Language is removed that authorized the Freshwater Aquatic Algae Control Account to be used for grants for sea lettuce research and removal for Puget Sound communities during the 2009-11 biennium.

The Freshwater Aquatic Algae Control Account is renamed as the Aquatic Algae Control Account (Account). The scope of the DOE's Account and program is expanded to include saltwater nuisance algae. Saltwater nuisance algae is defined.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The amended substitute bill allows funds in the Account to be used to establish contingency funds for emergent issues in addition to developing an aquatic algae control program. The amended substitute bill allows grants from the Account to be used for freshwater and saltwater nuisance algae monitoring and removal instead of saltwater nuisance algae research, survey, monitoring, and removal.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Just today, the WDFW staff intercepted a vessel infested with zebra mussels from the Great Lakes. Invasive species pose serious issues for the state. The WDFW staff will continue to maintain the existing program, with the highest priority being vessel inspection, as prevention is the best way to manage invasive species. There is substantial support from the boating community for these types of programs. Funding is used in the DOE to identify toxic algae blooms and to prevent health threats to people and animals. Over one-half of the DOE's funding for this purpose is provided as grants to local governments to prevent and control invasive aquatic algae.

(In support with amendments) The amendment to the bill does a good job of bridging an issue where there has been controversy in the past. This funding is important so that work controlling invasive species can continue at the current level. All recreational boaters contribute to these funds, whether the boat is used in freshwater or saltwater. This funding can help with periodic blooms of sea lettuce, and other potential invasive saltwater species. Outbreaks of aquatic algae are sporadic; the emergent contingency fund makes more sense than designating an amount for saltwater algae control.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Bill Tweit, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Don Seeberger, Department of Ecology.

(In support with amendments) Doug Levy, City of Federal Way; and Joe Daniels, Washington Lakes Protection Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.