

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2386

As of February 26, 2014

Title: An act relating to designating Washington's shoreline as a state maritime heritage area.

Brief Description: Designating Washington's shoreline as a state maritime heritage area.

Sponsors: Representatives Van De Wege, Appleton, Hayes, Moscoso, Pettigrew, S. Hunt, Takko, Zeiger, Muri, Tharinger, Ryu and Freeman.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/17/14, 57-40.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 2/25/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

Background: The National Park Service Maritime Heritage Program works to advance awareness and understanding of the role of maritime affairs in the history of the United States. The national Maritime Heritage Program maintains inventories of historic U.S. maritime properties and provides maritime heritage preservation assistance, public education, and project funding. In April 2010, the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, in partnership with several tribal, local, and heritage organizations, submitted a feasibility study to the National Park Service for consideration of Washington's saltwater coast as a national maritime heritage area. There is no Washington State program dedicated to state maritime heritage areas.

Summary of Bill: A state maritime heritage area designation that may be used to promote a shoreline area's heritage and tourism is created. The state maritime heritage area designation does not create any regulatory jurisdiction or authority, abridge the rights of owners of land within a designated area, or establish any additional legal rights or obligations.

The Washington saltwater coast is designated as a state maritime heritage area, including all federal, state, local, and tribal lands that allow public access and are partly located within one-quarter mile landward of the shoreline within the following counties: Clallam, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Mason, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston, and Whatcom. The designated area also includes the Lake Washington ship canal and the Lake Union shoreline.

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.

The stated purpose of designating the Washington coast as a state maritime heritage area is to facilitate partnerships among federal, state, local, and tribal governments, businesses, heritage organizations, individuals, and other entities to:

- honor the cultural resources of the maritime heritage area;
- increase public awareness and appreciation for the natural, historic, scenic, recreational, and cultural resources of the maritime heritage area;
- promote tourism and economic development within the state and local jurisdictions; and
- encourage Congress to designate the Washington saltwater coast as a national maritime heritage area.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: Support for the bill stems from the fact that businesses are able to leverage development based on this designation. There is also support for the offered amendment. Washington State has a rich maritime heritage that has been neglected. This bill recognizes Washington's maritime heritage and provides a tool for businesses and organizations to advertise themselves and promote tourism. There is some evidence to suggest this bill would promote working waterfronts and the maritime trades. This bill contains no regulatory language. There is no indication this bill would lead to further regulation in the future. The Legislature directed the feasibility study to be submitted to the National Park Service for consideration as a national heritage area. This bill does not require a staff, a budget, administrative oversight, or a director. This bill merely creates a designation aimed at recognizing and marketing the state's important maritime heritage.

CON: This bill may lead to increased federal impacts on property rights in Washington. There is support for the amendment offered. There should be some other way to recognize and promote state waterways without an official designation offered by the Legislature as this bill proposes. National heritage areas face public opposition in other regions of the country. National maritime heritage areas in Maryland faced increased regulation.

OTHER: There are not enough guarantees this bill will not lead to further regulation. There are concerns with the potential consequences of the bill but not with the bill itself.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Van de Wege, prime sponsor; Adrian Miller, Pope Resources; Les Bolton, Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority, Pacific NW Maritime Heritage Council; Allyson Brooks, State Historic Preservation Officer, Director, Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

CON: Jack Field, Janie Rose, WA Cattlemen's Assn.

OTHER: Tom Davis, WA Farm Bureau.