

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 6044

As Passed Senate, March 5, 2015

Title: An act relating to the construction of transportation facilities adjacent to or across a waterway.

Brief Description: Requiring the consideration of public access when designing a transportation facility adjacent to or across a waterway.

Sponsors: Senators Ericksen and Hobbs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/25/15 [DP].
Passed Senate: 3/05/15, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators King, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Fain, Vice Chair, Budget ; Hobbs, Ranking Minority Member; Liias, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ericksen, Habib, Jayapal, Litzow, Pedersen and Sheldon.

Staff: Brian Connell (786-7346)

Background: Under current law, the Department of Transportation (DOT) is not required to consider or report on the feasibility of providing a means of public access to a navigable river or waterway for public recreational purposes when constructing a new bridge, or rehabilitating or reconstructing an existing bridge, over a navigable river or another transportation facility that is adjacent to or crosses a waterway.

Summary of Engrossed Bill: DOT must consider and report on the feasibility of providing a means of public access to the navigable river or waterway for public recreational purposes during the design process for state highway projects that include the construction of a new bridge, or rehabilitating or reconstructing an existing bridge, across a navigable river or another transportation facility that is adjacent to or crosses a waterway.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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.

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: Access under bridges is important to rafters and it is important to safely unload and load boats onto rivers. This bill would make it safer to help both rafters and spill responders. Water trails are throughout the state and this bill would help establish greater access to rivers and shorelines. It is important to take a uniform approach to considering public boating access as a part of the process that goes into building highway projects. Departments of transportation in other states have statutory requirements to consider public boating access in the design of projects near waterways.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Rebecca Post, WA Recreational River Runners; Thomas O'Keefe, American Whitewater; Peter Schrappen, NW Marine Trade Assn.; Brittany Jarnot, Recreational Boating Assn. of WA; Frances Troje, WA Water Trails Assn.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.