

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1604

As Reported by House Committee On: Appropriations

Title: An act relating to expanding the permitted uses of surplus funds from boater education card fees to certain boating safety programs and activities.

Brief Description: Concerning expanding the permitted uses of surplus funds from boater education card fees to certain boating safety programs and activities.

Sponsors: Representatives Pettigrew, Hayes, Klippert, Griffey, Appleton, Haler and McBride; by request of Parks and Recreation Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/13/17, 2/21/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the allowable use of the Boating Safety Education Certification Account to include any State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) activity related to boating safety education.
- Allows any surplus funds from Boater Education Card fees to be used for State Parks boating safety education, rather than only for grants to local marine law enforcement programs.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Cody, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Hudgins, Jinkins, Kagi, Lytton, Pettigrew, Pollet, Sawyer, Senn, Springer, Stanford, Sullivan and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Stokesbary, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Caldier, Condotta, Haler, Harris, Nealey, Schmick, Taylor, Vick, Volz and Wilcox.

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.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Manweller.

Staff: Dan Jones (786-7118).

Background:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) provides Boater Education Cards (cards), which are required to operate a boat with 15 horsepower or greater in Washington. A card is obtained by completing an accredited boating safety education course or exam, submitting an application, and paying a \$10 application fee. A number of exemptions to the card exist, including boaters who were born before 1955, have a commercial fishing license or marine operator license, or are nonresidents with an equivalent card from another state or country.

The Boater Education Card requirement was phased in between July 1, 2005, and January 1, 2016, by including a progressively higher number of boaters over time (as determined by age).

Application fee revenue is deposited in the Boating Safety Education Certification Account, a nonappropriated account used by State Parks for the administration costs of the Boater Education Card program. Any surplus fee revenue must be distributed to local marine law enforcement programs.

In addition to authority over Boater Education Cards, State Parks has authority over boating safety education in general, such as the ability to adopt rules consistent with United States Coast Guard regulations.

Summary of Bill:

The allowable use of the Boating Safety Education Certification Account is broadened to include all of the authority State Parks has over boating safety education, not just the authority specific to the cards. State Parks may use surplus card revenue for either boating safety education or local marine law enforcement grants, rather than only for the local grants. Language related to the phase-in period of the Boater Education Card, which ended on January 1, 2016, is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The bill would give the State Parks and Recreation Commission flexibility in how it spends boater education dollars, but the focus would remain on boater education safety initiatives. For example, the bill might allow more funding to be spent on a campaign to prevent boating under the influence, marine law enforcement training, or community outreach throughout the state. The flexibility in spending provided by this bill would help fill gaps from restrictions in United States Coast Guard grant funding.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Wade Alonzo, Washington State Parks.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.