

**RCW 88.16.170 Oil tankers—Intent and purpose.** Because of the danger of spills, the legislature finds that the transportation of crude oil and refined petroleum products by tankers on the Columbia river and on Puget Sound and adjacent waters creates a great potential hazard to important natural resources of the state and to jobs and incomes dependent on these resources.

The legislature recognizes that the Columbia river has many natural obstacles to navigation and shifting navigation channels that create the risk of an oil spill. The legislature also recognizes Puget Sound and adjacent waters are a relatively confined saltwater environment with irregular shorelines and therefore there is a greater than usual likelihood of long-term damage from any large oil spill.

The legislature further recognizes that certain areas of the Columbia river and Puget Sound and adjacent waters have limited space for maneuvering a large oil tanker and that these waters contain many natural navigational obstacles as well as a high density of commercial and pleasure boat traffic.

For these reasons, it is important that large oil tankers be piloted by highly skilled persons who are familiar with local waters and that such tankers have sufficient capability for rapid maneuvering responses.

It is therefore the intent and purpose of RCW 88.16.180 and 88.16.190 to decrease the likelihood of oil spills on the Columbia river and on Puget Sound and its shorelines by requiring all oil tankers above a certain size to employ licensed pilots and to be escorted by a tug or tugs while navigating on certain areas of Puget Sound and adjacent waters. [1991 c 200 s 601; 1975 1st ex.s. c 125 s 1.]

**Effective dates—1991 c 200:** See RCW 90.56.901.

**Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 125:** "If any provision of this act, or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act, or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1975 1st ex.s. c 125 s 6.]

**Study authorized and directed:** "The House and Senate Transportation and Utilities Committees are authorized and directed to study the feasibility, benefits, and disadvantages of requiring similar pilot and tug assistance for vessels carrying other potentially hazardous materials and to submit their findings and recommendations prior to the 45th session of the Washington legislature in January, 1977. Such study shall also include a report on the feasibility, benefits and disadvantages of requiring vessels under tug escort to observe a speed limit, and such study shall include a discussion of the impact of a speed limit on the maneuverability of the vessel, the effectiveness of the tug escort and other legal and technical considerations material and relevant to the required study. Such study shall also include an evaluation and recommendations as to whether there should be a transfer of all duties and responsibilities of the board of pilotage commissioners to the Washington utilities and transportation commission or other state agency, and alternate methods for establishing fair and equitable rates for tug escort and pilot transfer." [1975 1st ex.s. c 125 s 5.]

*Discharge of oil and hazardous substances into state waters: RCW  
90.56.010 through 90.56.040.*