

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6322

As Reported By House Committee On:

Transportation

Title: An act relating to recreational vehicle sanitary disposal facilities.

Brief Description: Adjusting fees used for recreational vehicle sanitary facilities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senator Owen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/22/96 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 25 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Skinner, Vice Chairman; R. Fisher, Ranking Minority Member; Hatfield, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Blanton; Brown; Buck; Cairnes; Chandler; Chopp; Elliot; Hankins; Horn; Johnson; McMahan; Ogden; Quall; Robertson; Romero; D. Schmidt; Scott; Sterk and Tokuda.

Staff: Jennifer Joly (786-7305).

Background: In 1980 the Legislature created the recreational vehicle (RV) account in the motor vehicle fund. The account is funded by an annual \$1 licensing fee for each licensed camper, travel trailer and motor home. The Department of Transportation (DOT) is directed to use moneys deposited in the account for the construction and maintenance of recreational vehicle sanitary disposal systems in safety rest areas.

A citizens' advisory committee recommends how DOT should expend funds from the RV account. Since the fund was created, RV dump stations have been installed in 17 of the 39 safety rest areas. These facilities are very popular and are often used when other public and private dump stations are closed.

Over the past few years, revenues generated by the RV licensing fee have been insufficient to cover the expenditures associated with the RV sanitary disposal systems. The primary reasons for the insufficient revenues are (1) rising sewage

costs; (2) heavier use of the facilities than was anticipated; and (3) the rate of inflation having outpaced the increase in the number of licensed recreational vehicles.

Although there is currently a positive balance in the RV account, this has been achieved through deferral and cancellation of sanitary system construction. Furthermore, the true cost of maintaining and operating these facilities has not been reflected in the annual maintenance charges to the RV account. DOT plans to change this practice so that authorized costs are charged to the account.

Summary of Amended Bill: The licensing fee for funding the RV account is raised from \$1 to \$3. The fee increase is effective with motor vehicle fees due or to become due September 1, 1996.

In the future the DOT is authorized to increase the RV account fee by a percentage that exceeds the fiscal growth factor.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The striking amendment retains the initial RV account fee increase from \$1 to \$3, but allows the DOT to increase the fee by a percentage that exceeds the fiscal growth factor in the future. (RCW 43.135.055, Initiative 601, prohibits state agencies from raising fees by an amount greater than the fiscal growth factor, i.e., the three-year average rate of population increase and inflation, without prior legislative approval.) However, subsequent RV account fee adjustments (1) may occur only once every four years, following consultation with representatives of the RV user community; (2) must be preceded by an evaluation; (3) may not exceed 50 cents/biennium; and (4) DOL must receive six months' prior notification.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 1996.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except section 1, which takes effect with motor vehicle fees due or to become due September 1, 1996.

Testimony For: There have been no fee increases since the RV account was created in 1980. The citizens' advisory committee which advises DOT on expenditures for RV account moneys has been working to raise the fee for a year. They would like to prevent closures of existing facilities and to see new RV dump stations open every two to four years.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Chuck Winsor, Washington State Good Sams; Judy Lorenzo, Department of Transportation; and Patti Miller-Crowley, Department of Transportation.