

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1311

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to pilotage license fees.

Brief Description: Providing for enforcement and administration of the pilotage act.

Sponsors: Representatives K. Schmidt, R. Fisher and Blanton; by request of Board of Pilotage Commissioners.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/2/95, 2/6/95 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/22/95, 98-0.

Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Benton, Vice 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; Koster; McMahan; Ogden; Patterson; Quall; Robertson; Romero; D. Schmidt; Scott and Tokuda.

Staff: Jennifer Joly (786-7305).

Background: Pilots are responsible for the navigation of U.S. and foreign flag vessels in Puget Sound and Grays Harbor.

The Board of Pilotage Commissioners' (BPC) primary functions relate to pilot licensing and regulation. The BPC is responsible for the administration of pilot qualification and performance standards, training and educational requirements; setting pilotage tariffs; and monitoring the pilot and shipping industry to ensure adherence to the Pilotage Act.

In order to pilot a vessel in Puget Sound or Grays Harbor, one must hold a pilot's license. Pilot licenses are valid for five years. An annual license fee, not to exceed \$1,500, is established by the BPC.

During the past several years, expenditures have exceeded the incoming revenue which is derived entirely from annual pilot license fees. Account reserves have been depleted; and revenues, at the statutory maximum of \$1500 per license for the 1995-97 biennium, will not provide adequate funding for required BPC functions.

Summary of Bill: For the period beginning July 1, 1995, through June 30, 1999, the annual license fee established by the Board of Pilotage Commissioners shall be \$2,500. For the period beginning July 1, 1999, the fee shall be \$3,000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 1995.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 1995.

Testimony For: The BPC is funded entirely from the annual license fees paid by the pilots. The pilots, however, are fully reimbursed for these licenses through pilotage tariffs. The pilots and the maritime industry support this legislation to ensure adequate funding of the BPC in support of their vital functions of preventing the loss of lives and property, and protecting the marine environment.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Larry Vognild, Board of Pilotage Commissioners; Captain Michael Gavin, Board of Pilotage Commissioners; Jim Moe, Puget Sound Steamship Operators Association; and Dennis Marshall, Board of Pilotage Commissioners.