

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2509

As Reported By House Committee On:

Government Operations

Title: An act relating to maritime historic restoration and preservation.

Brief Description: Funding maritime historic restoration and preservation.

Sponsors: Representatives Reams, Jacobsen, Radcliff, Basich, Kessler, Chopp, Dickerson, Hatfield, Poulsen and Murray; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Operations: 1/23/96 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Reams, Chairman; Cairnes, Vice Chairman; Goldsmith, Vice Chairman; Rust, Ranking Minority Member; Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Conway; R. Fisher; Hargrove; Honeyford; Hymes; Mulliken; D. Schmidt and Wolfe.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background: Unless exempted, no person may own or operate a vessel on waters of the state unless the vessel has been registered. After paying a registration fee and the required excise tax, a person is issued a registration number and a decal for the vessel. Vessel registrations are renewable each year. It has been suggested that a number of vessel owners would voluntarily contribute to the restoration and preservation activities of the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport and the Steamer Virginia V Foundation at the time they register their vessels.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Department of Licensing must provide people who are registering their vessels an opportunity to make voluntary donations to support the maritime historic restoration and preservation activities of the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport and the Steamer Virginia V Foundation.

A maritime historic restoration and preservation account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. All voluntary donations made when people register their vessels are deposited into the account. The account is not subject to allotment reductions.

At the end of each fiscal year, the State Treasurer must pay the Department of Licensing an amount equal to its administrative expenses for collecting and transmitting the voluntary donations. The State Treasurer also deducts its reasonable administrative expenses for maintaining the account and disbursing the funds.

The State Treasurer, after deducting the administrative expenses, must pay one-half of the fund balance to the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport or its corporate successor and the other one-half of the fund balance to the Steamer Virginia V Foundation or its corporate successor. If either entity or its corporate successor ceases to exist, the State Treasurer must pay the entire balance of the funds to the remaining organization. If both entities and their corporate successors cease to exist, the Department of Licensing must discontinue collecting the voluntary donations, and any funds in the account escheat to the state Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and the state marine parks account.

The Secretary of State, the directors of the state historical societies, the director of the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and two members of the recreational boating community selected by the Secretary of State shall meet and report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of the program by January 31, 1998. The report must include findings on the potential to expand the voluntary funding to other historic vessels.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Language is added to clarify which state accounts the fund balance may escheat. A report to the Legislature in 1998 is added. The report must include findings on the potential of expanding the program to other vessels.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This program is similar to voluntary contribution programs offered by utility companies. Additional money is needed for both ships to cover their capital costs. Some of the extra costs are due to increased federal regulations on sewage disposal. These boats are important to the public because they teach citizens about our states heritage.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Reams, prime sponsor; Jan Gray, Jennifer Lund and Kerry Fowler, Sound Experience; Robert Gruhn, King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission; Les Bolton, Grays Harbor Historical Seaport; Max Vekich, Westport Coast Guard Museum; and Ralph Munro, Secretary of State.