

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5508

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines, March 5, 2001

Title: An act relating to the recreation resource account.

Brief Description: Modifying distributions to the recreation resource account.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Oke, Hargrove, Patterson, Johnson, Rasmussen, Fraser, Horn, Hochstatter, McDonald and Swecker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines: 2/26/01, 3/5/01 [DPS-TRAN].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5508 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Transportation.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; Constantine, Hargrove, Morton, Oke, Snyder and Stevens.

Staff: David Johnson (786-7754)

Background: The marine fuel tax refund account is the repository for revenues from the tax on motor vehicle fuel used solely for marine applications. The revenues remain in the fund until a claim for a refund is made.

If claims for refunds are not made in the time allowed, the state gains the right to such refunds. The unclaimed money in the marine fuel tax refund account is split between the recreational resource account and the motor vehicle fund.

The recreational resource account receives 18/23 of the unclaimed money. The motor vehicle fuel account receives 5/23 of the unclaimed money. This split is based on the fuel tax rate that was in effect January 1, 1990, which was 18 cents per gallon. Whatever amount remains after payment to the recreational resource account (currently 5 cents per gallon) is transferred to the motor vehicle fuel account.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Treasurer must transfer all of the money in the marine fuel tax refund account that is not required for payment of refund claims or costs to the recreation resource account. The proportional distribution factor, the motor vehicle fuel tax rate in effect January 1, 1990, is eliminated.

Five twenty-thirds of the money in the recreation resource account must be spent on aquatic nuisance species control. Parks and Recreation is to receive 1/4 of this for public education. Fish and Wildlife is to receive 3/4 for enforcement and control of aquatic nuisance species.

Eighteen twenty-thirds of the money in the recreation resource account must be spent to benefit watercraft recreation.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute delineated how the revenues are to be allocated. The substitute requires that 5/23rds of the revenue, after expenses, be spent on aquatic nuisance species control. One quarter to Parks and Recreation for education, three quarters to Fish and Wildlife for enforcement. The substitute requires that 18/23rds be spent to benefit watercraft recreation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Aquatic nuisance control and recreational facilities are funded from this account. This money would be well spent on enforcement and education. The amount of money is a small portion of the transportation budget but would be a large increase to these important programs. It could also make more federal matching dollars available. More boat launches are needed. Many are currently closed because they're not up to standards.

Testimony Against: Half of the money this bill would transfer would have gone to local governments.

Testified: Amy Arnis, WSDOT; Bernard Murray, Ray Schow, RBAW (pro); Cliff Webster, NW Marine Trade Assn. (pro).