

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5918

C 293 L 19

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing whale watching guidelines in the boating safety education program.

Sponsors: Senators Lovelett, Warnick, Van De Wege, Conway, Hasegawa, Hobbs, King, Wilson, C., Randall, Nguyen, Dhingra, Frockt, Hawkins, Billig, Das, Hunt, Darneille, Wagoner and Palumbo.

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Boating Safety Education Program. The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) must, among other things, adopt and enforce recreational boating safety rules, including equipment and navigating requirements, consistent with U.S. Coast Guard regulations. Additionally, the Commission must coordinate a statewide boating safety education program. The program includes a minimum standard of boating safety education accomplishment, minimum standards for boating safety course of instruction and examination, and accreditation to boating safety education courses operated by entities such as the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadrons. Additionally, an equivalency exam may be taken as an alternative to the boating safety education course.

In order to operate a motor driven boat or vessel of 15 horsepower or greater, a person must be at least twelve years old and possess a boater education card; or be accompanied by and under the supervision of a person at least sixteen years old who has a boater education card.

Certain individuals are not required to have a boater education card, including:

- any person born before January 1, 1955;
- operators with a commercial fishing license operating a commercial fishing boat;
- operators with U.S. Coast Guard marine operator license when operating the vessel authorized under the license;
- operators of exempt vessels, including vessels for law enforcement or official government work;
- operators of rented, leased, or chartered vessels who complete the commission-approved educational checklist in lieu of a boater education card;

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- an operator who is a resident of another state or country and does not operate the vessel for more than 60 consecutive days;
- an operator who is a resident of another state or country who has a valid card from that state or country; or
- any person who has purchased a vessel within the last 60 days.

Southern Resident Killer Whale Task Force. The Governor issued an executive order in 2018 convening the Southern Resident Killer Whale Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force was directed to identify, prioritize, and support implementing a plan to address three threats to southern resident orca whales identified in the following order: (1) prey availability; (2) contaminants; and (3) disturbance from vessel noise. The Task Force, in its November 2018 report, recommended that additional education should be provided to commercial and recreational boaters.

Summary: The Boating Safety Education Program must include educational materials on whale watching guidelines and other voluntary and regulatory measures related to whale watching.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0	
House	90	5	(House amended)
Senate	48	1	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 28, 2019