

# **HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS**

## **SB 5944**

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**Title:** An act relating to management of state-owned aquatic lands.

**Brief Description:** Describing those lands eligible to be included in a city district aquatic lands management agreement.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen and Snyder.

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### **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Meeting Date:** March 31, 1999,

**Bill Analysis Prepared by:** Carole Richmond, Analyst (786-7114)

**Background:** State-owned aquatic lands are comprised of the bedlands, tidelands, and shorelands of navigable waters and are the lands transferred to the state from the federal government at statehood. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages over two million acres of state-owned aquatic lands. In defining the purpose of aquatic land management in 1984, the Legislature found that these lands should be managed for the benefit of the public; the revenues from the lease of state-owned aquatic lands should be used to enhance opportunities for shoreline access, public recreation, and environmental protection; and standards should be established for determining equitable and predictable lease rates for users of aquatic lands.

The management of state-owned aquatic lands favors water-dependent uses; that is, those uses which cannot logically exist in any location but on the water, such as ferry terminals, docks, and marinas. Nonwater-dependent uses are a low priority use and mean those uses that can exist in areas other than on the waterfront, such as condominiums and restaurants.

Lease rates are charged for most, but not all uses of state-owned aquatic lands, and vary depending upon the kind of use to be made of the lands. Water-dependent lease rates are charged at one-third of the full market value of the adjacent upland parcel, while nonwater-dependent rates are charged the full market value of adjacent upland parcels. The department is authorized to adjust annual rents paid under leases and must provide by rule for an administrative review of any rent if a lessee requests such a review.

Certain state-owned aquatic lands may be managed by port districts under port management agreements. At the request of a port district, the department and port may enter into an agreement authorizing the port district to manage state-owned aquatic lands abutting or used in conjunction with and contiguous to uplands owned, leased, or

otherwise managed by a port district for port purposes. When a port management agreement goes into effect, the port generally assumes the rights and responsibilities of the department. The administration of aquatic lands covered by a management agreement must be consistent with aquatic land policies provided under statute and the rent collected by port districts for the lease of state-owned aquatic lands is retained by the port in the case of water-dependent uses. For nonwater-dependent uses, however, the port pays the state 85 percent of the rent it receives.

Pierhead lines are established by the United States government to delineate where piers may be located so as to assist navigation. Waterways are established by the state as a public highway for watercraft that must be reserved from sale or lease. Pierhead lines may be found within waterway boundaries. The strip of waterway between pierhead lines and waterways may not contain any structures unless authorized by the department, or by a port district, if the area is covered under a port management agreement.

**Summary of Bill:** Upon request of a city, the department and city may enter into an agreement authorizing the city to manage state-owned aquatic lands for the purpose of operating a publicly owned marina. The provisions for the management of state-owned aquatic lands by a city are the same as the provisions for management by port districts:

- The lands that may be included in such an agreement are those state-owned aquatic lands abutting or used in conjunction with and contiguous to uplands owned, leased, or otherwise managed by a city.
- A city aquatic lands management agreement shall include, but not be limited to provisions defining the specific area to be managed, the term, conditions of occupancy, reservations, periodic review, and other conditions to ensure consistency with the state constitution and other policies of Chapter 79.90 RCW.
- The administration of state-owned aquatic lands covered by a management agreement must be consistent with the aquatic land policies of Chapter 79.90 through 79.96 RCW and the implementing rules adopted by the department.

The rent policies for lands managed under city aquatic lands management agreements are the same as those for port districts; that is, cities retain all of the rent from the lease of aquatic lands for water-dependent uses and retain 15 percent of the rent for nonwater-dependent uses.

The city and the Association of Washington Cities are directed to develop a proposed model management agreement that will be used as the basis for negotiating all city aquatic lands management agreements.

Cities have the final authority for review of any leases for which they are provided responsibility under a city aquatic lands management agreement.

The strip of waterway between a pierhead line and a waterway boundary may not contain structures unless a city authorizes such structures in an area covered under a city aquatic land management area.

***Appropriation:*** None.

***Fiscal Note:*** Available.

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

***Passed Senate:*** 3/12/99, 49-0