

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5424

As Passed Senate, March 12, 2005

Title: An act relating to the "Washington Lighthouses" special license plate.

Brief Description: Authorizing the "Washington Lighthouses" special plate.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, Swecker, Jacobsen, Hargrove and Doumit.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/10/05, 2/21/05 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/12/05, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Jacobsen, Vice Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Eide, Esser, Kastama, Mulliken, Oke, Spanel and Weinstein.

Staff: Dalene Sprick (786-7321)

Background: The Special License Plate Review Board was created in the 2003 session and charged with reviewing special license plate applications from groups requesting the creation of a special license plate series. Upon approval, the board forwards the application to the Legislature.

On September 10, 2004, the board formally approved the Lighthouse Environmental Programs "Washington Lighthouses" license plate application.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Licensing (DOL) must issue a special license plate for motor vehicles displaying a symbol or artwork approved by the Special License Plate Review Board and the legislature recognizing an organization which supports selected Washington State lighthouses and environmental education programs.

An applicant for a "Washington Lighthouses" license plate must pay an initial fee of \$40 and a renewal fee each year thereafter of \$30. The initial revenue generated from the plate sales must be deposited into the motor vehicle account until the state has been reimbursed for the implementation costs. Upon reimbursement, the revenue must be deposited into the Lighthouse Environmental Programs account established under this bill.

The DOL must enter into a contract with a qualified nonprofit organization requiring that the organization use the revenue generated by the license plate sales to disseminate funds for supporting selected Washington State lighthouses that are accessible to the public and staffed by volunteers; to provide environmental education programs; and to provide grants for other Washington lighthouses to assist in funding infrastructure preservation and restoration and to encourage and support interpretive programs by lighthouse docents.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This bill will support the volunteer programs that are offered to tourists that visit the lighthouse. The programs are 100 percent volunteer run and accommodate 35,000-40,000 visitors a year. 40 percent of these visitors are from out of state and 5-10 percent are from out of the country. The funds from the plates will help ensure that this icon and others like it will remain open to the public. Many lighthouses in the state need assistance to fund structural restoration and preservation. Our organization is already partnered with five of the 27 publically owned lighthouses in the state and intend on expanding our partnerships.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Don Meehan, Admiralty Head Lighthouse and Gloria Wahlin, Lighthouse Environmental Programs.