

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5222

As of February 6, 2023

Title: An act relating to the "pick it up, Washington" litter control program.

Brief Description: Concerning the "pick it up, Washington" litter control program.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, J. and Fortunato.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Technology: 2/08/23.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Department of Ecology to oversee a network of volunteers to participate in the "Pick it up, Washington" litter control program.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY

Staff: Gregory Vogel (786-7413)

Background: Litter Tax. A tax is imposed on businesses whose products, including packaging, wrapping, and containers, are reasonably related to the litter problem in the state. The types of products that fall under this tax include beer, cigarettes, soft drinks, newspapers and magazines, glass containers, metal containers, and household paper and paper products. The rate of the tax is 0.015 percent as applied to the value of products manufactured within the state, in the case of manufacturers, and as applied to the gross proceeds of sales of the products that are sold within the state, in the case of wholesalers and retailers.

The revenues from the litter tax are allocated to the Department of Ecology (Ecology) from the Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Account. Ecology is the coordinating agency between organizations looking to assist in waste reduction, litter control, and recycling, as well as with state agencies, including the Department of Corrections (DOC)

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and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and local governments that receive funding for litter control and recycling activities. Ecology employs teens through the Ecology Youth Corps to collect litter from highways, parks, and other public areas. Ecology is required to develop criteria for evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the participating agencies' litter collection programs.

Litter Tax Account Distribution. The funds in the litter tax account are distributed as follows:

- 40 percent is provided to Ecology for their use and for the Department of Natural Resources, DOC, WSDOT, and the Parks and Recreation Commission for litter collection programs—the Department of Revenue also receives a small portion of the revenue for administering the funds in the account;
- 20 percent of the litter tax revenues goes to local governments for waste reduction, litter control, and recycling activities; and
- 40 percent of the funds go to Ecology for waste reduction and recycling efforts—these funds are also used for statewide public awareness programs, and to defray local government administration costs so they can apply all of their funding to achieving program goals.

Adopt-A-Highway. The statewide Adopt-A-Highway Program is a roadside cleanup program administered by WSDOT. Through the program, volunteers adopt a section of highway by agreeing to take care of it for two to four years. WSDOT provides safety training and equipment, and picks up the bags of litter left along the roadside by the volunteers. In addition, WSDOT installs signs giving recognition to the group or individuals adopting the highway.

Summary of Bill: Ecology must oversee a network of volunteers to participate in the "Pick it Up, Washington" program. The program consists of pick it up volunteers willing to assist with litter removal in public places. Ecology must operate the program within existing resources.

Ecology must advertise and promote the program and create and manage a list of pick it up volunteers. Ecology may reserve the right to exclude any individual from participating if it determines that allowing such an individual to participate would create a risk to the health or safety of that individual, other volunteers, or the public.

Ecology may develop appropriate methods to give public recognition to the positive contributions of pick it up volunteers in their communities.

Ecology must seek pick it up volunteers to remove litter that is not deposited in receptacles in public places. Ecology is not responsible for arranging for litter removal if another state or local agency is successfully performing litter removal on a regular basis.

"Pick it up volunteer" means an individual who agrees to participate in the program. A pick

it up volunteer is not compensated and is not a state actor, agent, or employee of the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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