

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6120

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to providing a registration exemption for certain vessels.

Brief Description: Providing a registration exemption for certain vessels.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senator Mullet).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/23/16, 2/29/16 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by Committee)

- Adds an exemption to the vessel registration requirement for vessels with motors that draw 250 watts or less that propel the vessel no faster than 10 miles per hour and are used in Washington waters.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Harmsworth, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregerson, Hayes, Hickel, Kochmar, McBride, Moeller, Morris, Ortiz-Self, Pike, Riccelli, Rodne, Rossetti, Sells, Shea, Stambaugh, Tarleton and Young.

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306).

Background:

State law defines a "vessel" as every watercraft used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on the water, other than a seaplane. The definition of "waters of this state" in statute means any waters within the territorial limits of this state as described in federal code (43 U.S. Code § 1312).

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.

Vessel Registration. Within the first 60 days of use in Washington waters, a vessel must be registered at the Department of Licensing, a county auditor's office, or a licensing subagent's office. The registration fee is \$10.50. There is also an excise tax of 0.5 percent of fair market value, or \$5, whichever is greater. Exemptions may be made if the vessel is:

- a military vessel owned by the United States government;
- a non-recreation public vessel owned by the United States government;
- owned by a state, county, or city and is used primarily for governmental purposes;
- registered or numbered under the laws of another country;
- a valid cruise ship visiting less than 60 days;
- currently registered in another state and is in Washington for less than 60 days;
- owned by a nonresident and is in Washington for repairs and other services;
- equipped with propulsion machinery of less than 10 horsepower that serves as an additional vessel to a "numbered" registered vessel;
- under 16 feet in overall length that has no propulsion machinery of any type or that is not used on waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States or on the high seas beyond the territorial seas for vessels owned in the United States and are powered by propulsion machinery of 10 or less horsepower;
- without propulsion machinery except for human power;
- a vessel primarily engaged in commerce that has or is required to have a valid marine document as a vessel of the United States;
- a commercial vessel registered with the Department of Revenue;
- a vessel primarily engaged in commerce that is owned by a resident of a foreign county;
- being held for sale by any licensed dealer;
- owned by a nonresident with a nonresident vessel permit after 60 days; or
- purchased from a licensed dealer by a nonresident under a use permit.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The bill adds an exemption to the vessel registration requirement for vessels with motors that draw 250 watts or less that propel the vessel no faster than 10 miles per hour and are not used on waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States or on the high seas beyond the territorial seas for vessels owned in the United States.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The amended bill adds that the vessels with motors that draw 250 watts or less that propel the vessel no faster than 10 miles per hour cannot be used on waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States or on the high seas beyond the territorial seas for vessels owned in the United States.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Currently, when a vessel is over 16 feet you must register the vessel. This bill allows, for example, vessels like kayaks or canoes to use a small electric outboard motor without having to register. Washington State Parks supports the bill, but receives \$2 million per biennium in federal funds which may be at risk since these vessels are not restricted from use in federal waters. A committee amendment is recommended to restrict these vessels to just Washington waters.

The electric outboard motor is very portable at 250 watts and weighs very little. The motor works greats on paddling-type vessels to help people enjoy the water. This provides power for the vessel, but is a very clean and efficient propulsion, along with being good for the environment. We support the committee amendment and will work directly with the federal government on getting an exemption for use in federal waters.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Mullet, prime sponsor; Linda Ham-Grez, PropEle Electric Boat Motors; and Wade Alonzo, Washington State Parks.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.