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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1379**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

**By** House Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Lovick, Boehnke, Sutherland, Ryu, and Dent)

AN ACT Relating to establishing an unpiloted aircraft system state coordinator and program funding source; amending RCW 47.68.250, 47.68.250, and 47.68.020; adding a new section to chapter 47.68 RCW; providing effective dates; providing an expiration date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 47.68 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Within amounts collected from commercial unpiloted aircraft registration fees pursuant to RCW 47.68.250(1), the aviation division director (also known as the senior state aviation official) or the aviation division director's designee shall act as the unpiloted aircraft system coordinator. The unpiloted aircraft system coordinator serves primarily in an advisory role and is not authorized to direct unpiloted aircraft system operations, training, or policy outside the department. The duties of the unpiloted aircraft system coordinator include:

(a) Assisting with unpiloted aircraft system training and continuing education for state agencies;

(b) Coordinating with local governments on state and federal unpiloted aircraft system policies and regulations;

(c) Acting as a state level coordinator for unpiloted aircraft system operations during a governor declaration of emergency pursuant to RCW 43.06.210;

(d) Coordinating with the federal aviation administration and state agencies on unpiloted aircraft system trends;

(e) Identifying and disseminating information on unpiloted aircraft system training sites;

(f) Establishing and maintaining an unpiloted aircraft system coordination website for state and local governments;

(g) Assisting with the advancement of unpiloted aircraft systems across the state in coordination with the department of commerce, the aerospace industry, and the commercial unmanned aircraft systems industry;

(h) Acting as the principal advisor to the secretary on unpiloted aircraft system matters;

(i) Undertaking other unpiloted aircraft system coordination duties that are deemed appropriate by the aviation division director and the unpiloted aircraft system coordinator including, but not limited to, overseeing unpiloted aircraft system symposiums or other events for state agencies and other stakeholder groups.

(2) The department may adopt rules to implement this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 47.68.250 and 2020 c 304 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Every aircraft, inclusive of commercial unpiloted aircraft systems, must be registered with the department for each calendar year in which the aircraft is operated or is based within this state. A fee of fifteen dollars is charged for each such registration and each annual renewal thereof.

(2) The department must review the fee schedule based on the number of unpiloted aircraft systems registered under any single entity. Consideration should be given to the cost to administer the program and the number of commercial aircraft registered in the state. The department shall collaborate with the department of commerce, the department of revenue, and industry representatives in determining any recommendations to revise the initial fee. The report is due to the transportation committees of the legislature by December 1, 2022.

(3) Possession of the appropriate effective federal certificate, permit, rating, or license relating to ownership and airworthiness of the aircraft, and payment of the excise tax imposed by Title 82 RCW for the privilege of using the aircraft within this state during the year for which the registration is sought, and payment of the registration fee required by this section are the only requisites for registration of an aircraft under this section.

((~~(3)~~)) (4) The registration fee imposed by this section is payable to and collected by the secretary. The fee for any calendar year must be paid during the month of January, and collected by the secretary at the time of the collection by him or her of the excise tax. If the secretary is satisfied that the requirements for registration of the aircraft have been met, he or she must issue to the owner of the aircraft a certificate of registration therefor. The secretary must pay to the state treasurer the registration fees collected under this section, which registration fees must be credited to the aeronautics account.

((~~(4)~~)) (5) It is not necessary for the registrant to provide the secretary with originals or copies of federal certificates, permits, ratings, or licenses. The secretary must issue certificates of registration, or such other evidences of registration or payment of fees as he or she may deem proper; and in connection therewith may prescribe requirements for the possession and exhibition of such certificates or other evidences.

((~~(5)~~)) (6) The provisions of this section do not apply to:

(a) An aircraft owned by and used exclusively in the service of any government or any political subdivision thereof, including the government of the United States, any state, territory, or possession of the United States, or the District of Columbia, which is not engaged in carrying persons or property for commercial purposes;

(b) An aircraft registered under the laws of a foreign country;

(c) An aircraft that is owned by a nonresident if:

(i) The aircraft remains in this state or is based in this state, or both, for a period less than ninety days; or

(ii) The aircraft is a large private airplane as defined in RCW 82.08.215 and remains in this state for a period of ninety days or longer, but only when:

(A) The airplane is in this state exclusively for the purpose of repairs, alterations, or reconstruction, including any flight testing related to the repairs, alterations, or reconstruction, or for the purpose of continual storage of not less than one full calendar year;

(B) An employee of the facility providing these services is on board the airplane during any flight testing; and

(C) Within ninety days of the date the airplane first arrived in this state during the calendar year, the nonresident files a written statement with the department indicating that the airplane is exempt from registration under this subsection ((~~(5)~~)) (6)(c)(ii). The written statement must be filed in a form and manner prescribed by the department and must include such information as the department requires. The department may require additional periodic verification that the airplane remains exempt from registration under this subsection ((~~(5)~~)) (6)(c)(ii) and that written statements conform with the provisions of chapter 5.50 RCW;

(d) ((~~An~~)) A piloted aircraft engaged principally in commercial flying constituting an act of interstate or foreign commerce;

(e) An aircraft owned by the commercial manufacturer thereof while being operated for test or experimental purposes, or for the purpose of training crews for purchasers of the aircraft;

(f) An aircraft being held for sale, exchange, delivery, test, or demonstration purposes solely as stock in trade of an aircraft dealer licensed under Title 14 RCW; ((~~and~~))

(g) An aircraft based within the state that is in an unairworthy condition, is not operated within the registration period, and has obtained a written exemption issued by the secretary; and

(h) Unpiloted aircraft systems used exclusively for hobby or recreation.

((~~(6)~~)) (7) The secretary must be notified within thirty days of any change in ownership of a registered aircraft. The notification must contain the N, NC, NR, NL, or NX number of the aircraft, the full name and address of the former owner, and the full name and address of the new owner. For failure to so notify the secretary, the registration of that aircraft may be canceled by the secretary, subject to reinstatement upon application and payment of a reinstatement fee of ten dollars by the new owner.

((~~(7)~~)) (8) A municipality or port district that owns, operates, or leases an airport, as defined in RCW 47.68.020, with the intent to operate, must require from an aircraft owner proof of aircraft registration as a condition of leasing or selling tiedown or hangar space for an aircraft. It is the responsibility of the lessee or purchaser to register the aircraft. Proof of registration must be provided according to the following schedule:

(a) For the purchase of tiedown or hangar space, the municipality or port district must allow the purchaser thirty days from the date of the application for purchase to produce proof of aircraft registration.

(b) For the lease of tiedown or hangar space that extends thirty days or more, the municipality or port district must allow the lessee thirty days to produce proof of aircraft registration from the date of the application for lease of tiedown or hangar space.

(c) For the lease of tiedown or hangar space that extends less than thirty days, the municipality or port district must allow the lessee to produce proof of aircraft registration at any point prior to the final day of the lease.

((~~(8)~~)) (9) The airport must work with the aviation division to assist in its efforts to register aircraft by providing information about based aircraft on an annual basis as requested by the division.

(10) The department may adopt rules to implement this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 47.68.250 and 2019 c 232 s 23 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Every aircraft, inclusive of commercial unpiloted aircraft systems, must be registered with the department for each calendar year in which the aircraft is operated or is based within this state. A fee of fifteen dollars is charged for each such registration and each annual renewal thereof.

(2) The department must review the fee schedule based on the number of unpiloted aircraft systems registered under any single entity. Consideration should be given to the cost to administer the program and the number of commercial aircraft registered in the state. The department shall collaborate with the department of commerce, the department of revenue, and industry representatives in determining any recommendations to revise the initial fee. The report is due to the transportation committees of the legislature by December 1, 2022.

(3) Possession of the appropriate effective federal certificate, permit, rating, or license relating to ownership and airworthiness of the aircraft, and payment of the excise tax imposed by Title 82 RCW for the privilege of using the aircraft within this state during the year for which the registration is sought, and payment of the registration fee required by this section are the only requisites for registration of an aircraft under this section.

((~~(3)~~)) (4) The registration fee imposed by this section is payable to and collected by the secretary. The fee for any calendar year must be paid during the month of January, and must be collected by the secretary at the time of the collection by him or her of the excise tax. If the secretary is satisfied that the requirements for registration of the aircraft have been met, he or she must issue to the owner of the aircraft a certificate of registration therefor. The secretary must pay to the state treasurer the registration fees collected under this section, which registration fees must be credited to the aeronautics account.

((~~(4)~~)) (5) It is not necessary for the registrant to provide the secretary with originals or copies of federal certificates, permits, ratings, or licenses. The secretary must issue certificates of registration, or such other evidences of registration or payment of fees as he or she may deem proper; and in connection therewith may prescribe requirements for the possession and exhibition of such certificates or other evidences.

((~~(5)~~)) (6) The provisions of this section do not apply to:

(a) An aircraft owned by and used exclusively in the service of any government or any political subdivision thereof, including the government of the United States, any state, territory, or possession of the United States, or the District of Columbia, which is not engaged in carrying persons or property for commercial purposes;

(b) An aircraft registered under the laws of a foreign country;

(c) An aircraft that is owned by a nonresident if:

(i) The aircraft remains in this state or is based in this state, or both, for a period less than ninety days; or

(ii) The aircraft is a large private airplane as defined in RCW 82.08.215 and remains in this state for a period of ninety days or longer, but only when:

(A) The airplane is in this state exclusively for the purpose of repairs, alterations, or reconstruction, including any flight testing related to the repairs, alterations, or reconstruction, or for the purpose of continual storage of not less than one full calendar year;

(B) An employee of the facility providing these services is on board the airplane during any flight testing; and

(C) Within ninety days of the date the airplane first arrived in this state during the calendar year, the nonresident files a written statement with the department indicating that the airplane is exempt from registration under this subsection ((~~(5)~~)) (6)(c)(ii). The written statement must be filed in a form and manner prescribed by the department and must include such information as the department requires. The department may require additional periodic verification that the airplane remains exempt from registration under this subsection ((~~(5)~~)) (6)(c)(ii) and that written statements conform with the provisions of chapter 5.50 RCW;

(d) ((~~An~~)) A piloted aircraft engaged principally in commercial flying constituting an act of interstate or foreign commerce;

(e) An aircraft owned by the commercial manufacturer thereof while being operated for test or experimental purposes, or for the purpose of training crews for purchasers of the aircraft;

(f) An aircraft being held for sale, exchange, delivery, test, or demonstration purposes solely as stock in trade of an aircraft dealer licensed under Title 14 RCW; ((~~and~~))

(g) An aircraft based within the state that is in an unairworthy condition, is not operated within the registration period, and has obtained a written exemption issued by the secretary; and

(h) Unpiloted aircraft systems used exclusively for hobby or recreation.

((~~(6)~~)) (7) The secretary must be notified within thirty days of any change in ownership of a registered aircraft. The notification must contain the N, NC, NR, NL, or NX number of the aircraft, the full name and address of the former owner, and the full name and address of the new owner. For failure to so notify the secretary, the registration of that aircraft may be canceled by the secretary, subject to reinstatement upon application and payment of a reinstatement fee of ten dollars by the new owner.

((~~(7)~~)) (8) A municipality or port district that owns, operates, or leases an airport, as defined in RCW 47.68.020, with the intent to operate, must require from an aircraft owner proof of aircraft registration as a condition of leasing or selling tiedown or hangar space for an aircraft. It is the responsibility of the lessee or purchaser to register the aircraft. Proof of registration must be provided according to the following schedule:

(a) For the purchase of tiedown or hangar space, the municipality or port district must allow the purchaser thirty days from the date of the application for purchase to produce proof of aircraft registration.

(b) For the lease of tiedown or hangar space that extends thirty days or more, the municipality or port district must allow the lessee thirty days to produce proof of aircraft registration from the date of the application for lease of tiedown or hangar space.

(c) For the lease of tiedown or hangar space that extends less than thirty days, the municipality or port district must allow the lessee to produce proof of aircraft registration at any point prior to the final day of the lease.

((~~(8)~~)) (9) The airport must work with the aviation division to assist in its efforts to register aircraft by providing information about based aircraft on an annual basis as requested by the division.

(10) The department may adopt rules to implement this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 47.68.020 and 1993 c 208 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

As used in this chapter, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

(1) "Aeronautics" means the science and art of flight and including, but not limited to, transportation by aircraft; the operation, construction, repair, or maintenance of aircraft, aircraft power plants and accessories, including the repair, packing, and maintenance of parachutes; the design, establishment, construction, extension, operation, improvement, repair, or maintenance of airports or air navigation facilities; and instruction in flying or ground subjects pertaining thereto.

(2) "Aircraft" means ((~~any~~)) a piloted or unmanned contrivance now known, or hereafter invented, used or designed for navigation of or flight in the air.

(3) "Airport" means any area of land or water which is used, or intended for use, for the landing and take-off of aircraft, and any appurtenant areas which are used, or intended for use, for airport buildings or other airport facilities or right-of-way, together with all airport buildings and facilities located thereon.

(4) "Department" means the state department of transportation.

(5) "Secretary" means the state secretary of transportation.

(6) "State" or "this state" means the state of Washington.

(7) "Air navigation facility" means any facility, other than one owned or operated by the United States, used in, available for use in, or designed for use in aid of air navigation, including any structures, mechanisms, lights, beacons, markers, communicating systems, or other instrumentalities or devices used or useful as an aid, or constituting an advantage or convenience, to the safe taking-off, navigation, and landing of aircraft, or the safe and efficient operation or maintenance of an airport, and any combination of any or all of such facilities.

(8) "Operation of aircraft" or "operate aircraft" means the use, navigation, or piloting of aircraft in the airspace over this state or upon any airport within this state.

(9) "Airman or airwoman" means any individual who engages, as the person in command, or as pilot, mechanic, or member of the crew in the navigation of aircraft while under way, and any individual who is directly in charge of the inspection, maintenance, overhauling, or repair of aircraft engines, airframes, propellers, or appliances, and any individual who serves in the capacity of aircraft dispatcher or air-traffic control tower operator; but does not include any individual employed outside the United States, or any individual employed by a manufacturer of aircraft, aircraft engines, airframes, propellers, or appliances to perform duties as inspector or mechanic in connection therewith, or any individual performing inspection or mechanical duties in connection with aircraft owned or operated by the person.

(10) "Aeronautics instructor" means any individual who for hire or reward engages in giving instruction or offering to give instruction in flying or ground subjects pertaining to aeronautics, but excludes any instructor in a public school, university, or institution of higher learning duly accredited and approved for carrying on collegiate work, who instructs in flying or ground subjects pertaining to aeronautics, while in the performance of his or her duties at such school, university, or institution.

(11) "Air school" means any person who advertises, represents, or holds out as giving or offering to give instruction in flying or ground subjects pertaining to aeronautics whether for or without hire or reward; but excludes any public school, university, or institution of higher learning duly accredited and approved for carrying on collegiate work.

(12) "Person" means any individual, firm, partnership, corporation, company, association, joint stock association, or body politic; and includes any trustee, receiver, assignee, or other similar representative thereof.

(13) "Municipal" means pertaining to a municipality, and "municipality" means any county, city, town, authority, district, or other political subdivision or public corporation of this state.

(14) "Airport hazard" means any structure, object of natural growth, or use of land, which obstructs the airspace required for the flight of aircraft in landing or taking off at an airport or is otherwise hazardous to such landing or taking off.

(15) "State airway" means a route in the navigable airspace over and above the lands or waters of this state, designated by the department as a route suitable for air navigation.

(16) "Aviation division" means the aeronautics division of the department.

(17) "Commercial" means an aircraft, piloted or unpiloted, not used exclusively for hobby or recreation.

(18) "Unpiloted aircraft system" means an aircraft operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft and is synonymous with the term "unmanned aircraft system". An unpiloted aircraft system must meet the same criteria and standards established by the federal aviation administration for an unmanned aircraft system.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 2 of this act expires July 1, 2031.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 3 of this act takes effect July 1, 2031.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2021.

**--- END ---**