

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5040

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As of January 21, 2021

**Title:** An act relating to enhancing litter control along state highways.

**Brief Description:** Enhancing litter control along state highways.

**Sponsors:** Senators Fortunato, Lovelett and Wilson, J..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Environment, Energy & Technology: 1/21/21.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Prioritizes litter control along state highways.
- Requires the Department of Ecology to contract with the Department of Transportation to schedule litter prevention messaging and coordination of litter emphasis patrols with the Washington State Patrol.

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### 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 from the Waste

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

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) 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 give priority to litter control along state highways when distributing the 40 percent of funds for litter control.

Ecology must contract with WSDOT to schedule litter prevention messaging and coordination of litter emphasis patrols with the Washington State Patrol. WSDOT may coordinate with Ecology to conduct litter pickup during scheduled maintenance closures as situations allow.

Local governments may initiate and apply to Ecology for reimbursement of litter clean-up activities on state highway ramps located within the jurisdiction of the local government.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 12, 2021.

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

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