

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SB 5040

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### C 231 L 21

Synopsis as Enacted

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

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

**Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology**

**Senate Committee on Transportation**

**House Committee on Environment & Energy**

**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 (litter tax 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 the 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

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collection programs; the Department of Revenue also receives a small portion for administering the funds in the account;

- 20 percent goes to local governments for waste reduction, litter control, and recycling activities; and
- 40 percent goes 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 Program. 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:** 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.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	49	0	
House	96	1	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 25, 2021