AN ACT Relating to commercial whale watching licenses; and amending RCW 77.65.615.

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

Sec. 1. RCW 77.65.615 and 2019 c 291 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) A commercial whale watching license is required for commercial whale watching operators viewing southern resident orca whales. The annual fee is two hundred dollars in addition to the annual application fee of seventy-five dollars.

(2) The annual fees for a commercial whale watching license as described in subsection (1) of this section must include fees for each motorized or sailing vessel or vessels as follows:

(a) One to twenty-four passengers, three hundred twenty-five dollars;
(b) Twenty-five to fifty passengers, five hundred twenty-five dollars;
(c) Fifty-one to one hundred passengers, eight hundred twenty-five dollars;
(d) One hundred one to one hundred fifty passengers, one thousand eight hundred twenty-five dollars; and
(e) One hundred fifty-one passengers or greater, two thousand dollars.

(3) The annual fees for a commercial whale watching license as described in subsection (1) of this section must include fees for each kayak as follows:

(a) One to ten kayaks, one hundred twenty-five dollars;
(b) Eleven to twenty kayaks, two hundred twenty-five dollars;
(c) Twenty-one to thirty kayaks, four hundred twenty-five dollars; and
(d) Thirty-one or more kayaks, six hundred twenty-five dollars.

(4) The holder of a commercial whale watching license for motorized or sailing vessels required under subsection (2) of this section may substitute the vessel designated on the license, or designate a vessel if none has previously been designated, if the license holder:

(a) Surrenders the previously issued license to the department;
(b) Submits to the department an application that identifies the currently designated vessel, the vessel proposed to be designated, and any other information required by the department; and
(c) Pays to the department a fee of thirty-five dollars and an application fee of one hundred five dollars.

(5) Unless the license holder owns all vessels identified on the application described in subsection (4)(b) of this section, the department may not change the vessel designation on the license more than once per calendar year.

(6) A person who is not the license holder may operate a motorized or sailing commercial whale watching vessel designated on the license only if:

(a) The person holds an alternate operator license issued by the director; and
(b) The person is designated as an alternate operator on the underlying commercial whale watching license.

(7) No individual may hold more than one alternate operator license. An individual who holds an alternate operator license may be designated as an alternate operator on an unlimited number of commercial whale watching licenses.

(8) The annual fee for an alternate operator license is two hundred dollars in addition to an annual application fee of seventy-five dollars.
(9) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Commercial whale watching" means the act of taking, or offering to take, passengers aboard a vessel in order to view southern resident orca whales in their natural habitat for a fee. Commercial whale watching does not mean the act of taking, or offering to take, passengers aboard a vessel in order to view other marine mammals.

(b) "Commercial whale watching operators" includes commercial vessels and kayak rentals that are engaged in the business of southern resident orca whale watching.

(c) "Commercial whale watching vessel" means any vessel that is being used as a means of transportation for individuals to engage in commercial southern resident orca whale watching.