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**SENATE BILL 6238**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2026 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Lovelett, Lias, Nobles, and Saldaña

Read first time 01/20/26. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to requirements of oil tankers operating in  
2 restricted waters; and amending RCW 88.16.190.

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

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 88.16.190 and 2019 c 289 s 2 are each amended to  
5 read as follows:

6 (1) Any oil tanker, whether enrolled or registered, of greater  
7 than (~~one hundred twenty-five thousand~~) 125,000 deadweight tons  
8 shall be prohibited from proceeding beyond a point east of a line  
9 extending from Discovery Island light south to New Dungeness light,  
10 unless authorized by the United States coast guard, pursuant to 33  
11 C.F.R. Sec. 165.1303.

12 (2)(a)(i) An oil tanker of (~~forty~~) 40,000 to (~~one hundred~~  
13 ~~twenty-five thousand~~) 125,000 deadweight tons may operate in the  
14 waters east of a line extending from Discovery Island light south to  
15 New Dungeness light and all points in the Puget Sound area, including  
16 but not limited to the San Juan Islands and connected waterways and  
17 the waters south of Admiralty Inlet, to the extent that these waters  
18 are within the territorial boundaries of Washington, only if the oil  
19 tanker is under the escort of a tug or tugs that have an aggregate  
20 shaft horsepower (~~equivalent to~~) of at least 3,000 or five percent

1 of the deadweight tons of the escorted oil tanker, whichever is  
2 greater.

3 (ii) Effective September 1, 2020, the following may operate in  
4 Rosario Strait and connected waterways to the east only if under the  
5 escort of a tug or tugs that have an aggregate shaft horsepower  
6 equivalent to at least five percent of the deadweight tons of a  
7 (~~forty thousand~~) 40,000 deadweight ton oil tanker: (A) Oil tankers  
8 of between (~~five thousand~~) 5,000 and (~~forty thousand~~) 40,000  
9 deadweight tons; and (B) both articulated tug barges and towed  
10 waterborne vessels or barges that are: (I) Designed to transport oil  
11 in bulk internal to the hull; and (II) greater than (~~five thousand~~)  
12 5,000 deadweight tons.

13 (iii) The requirements of (a)(ii) of this subsection: (A) Do not  
14 apply to vessels providing bunkering or refueling services; (B) do  
15 not apply to a towed general cargo deck barge; and (C) may be  
16 adjusted or suspended by rule by the board of pilotage commissioners,  
17 consistent with RCW 88.16.260(1)(c).

18 (b) An oil tanker, articulated tug barge, or towed waterborne  
19 vessel or barge in ballast or when unladen is not required to be  
20 under the escort of a tug.

21 (c) A tanker assigned a deadweight of less than (~~forty~~  
22 ~~thousand~~) 40,000 deadweight tons at the time of construction or  
23 reconstruction as reported in Lloyd's Register of Ships is not  
24 subject to the provisions of RCW 88.16.170 and 88.16.180.

25 (3) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this  
26 section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

27 (a) "Articulated tug barge" means a tank barge and a towing  
28 vessel joined by hinged or articulated fixed mechanical equipment  
29 affixed or connecting to the stern of the tank barge.

30 (b) "Oil tanker" means a self-propelled deep draft tank vessel  
31 designed to transport oil in bulk. "Oil tanker" does not include an  
32 articulated tug barge tank vessel.

33 (c) "Towed general cargo deck barge" means a waterborne vessel or  
34 barge designed to carry cargo on deck.

35 (d) "Waterborne vessel or barge" means any ship, barge, or other  
36 watercraft capable of traveling on the navigable waters of this state  
37 and capable of transporting any crude oil or petroleum product in

1 quantities of (~~ten-thousand~~) 10,000 gallons or more for purposes  
2 other than providing fuel for its motor or engine.

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