
Natural Resources Committee

SB 6538

Brief Description: Establishing the ballast water work group.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines (originally sponsored by Senators Regala, Jacobsen and Oke).

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to establish a ballast water work group to study issues related to ballast water technology; services needed by the industry and the state to protect the marine environment; and costs associated with, and possible funding methods for implementing the ballast water program.
- Directs the DFW to work cooperatively with the United States Coast Guard and the marine exchange to improve the ballast water information system.
- Modifies the date after which discharge of ballast water into waters of the state is authorized only if there has been an open sea exchange or the ballast water has been treated from July 1, 2002, to July 1, 2004.

Hearing Date: 2/20/02

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

In 2000 the Legislature enacted ballast water management legislation. This measure gave the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) the authority to establish a ballast water reporting program and to develop standards for the discharge of treated ballast water. This bill also included the requirement that after July 1, 2002, nonexempt vessels could only discharge ballast water into waters of the state if they either did an open sea exchange or had treated the ballast water according to the DFW standards.

Summary of Bill:

The DFW is required to establish a ballast water work group consisting of 12 members. The membership of the work group consists of: one person from the Governor's executive policy

office to serve as the chair of the work group; two representatives from the Puget Sound steamship operators; two representatives from the Columbia River steamship operators; three representatives from the Washington public ports, one of whom must be a marine engineer; two representatives from the petroleum transportation industry; and two representatives from the environmental community.

The ballast water work group must study the following issues: all issues related to ballast water technology, including exchange and treatment methods and the associated costs; services needed by the industry and the state to protect the marine environment; and costs associated with, and possible funding methods for implementing the ballast water program. The work group must submit a report to the Legislature by December 15, 2003. Staff support for the work group must come from existing staff at the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The work group is directed to begin its work immediately after the effective date of the legislation. The work group terminates on June 30, 2004.

The date after which discharge of ballast water into waters of the state is authorized only if there has been an open sea exchange or the ballast water has been treated, is modified from July 1, 2002, to July 1, 2004.

The DFW must work cooperatively with the United States Coast Guard and the marine exchange to improve the ballast water information system, and to make improvements no later than October 1, 2002. The cooperative effort is directed to strive to obtain ballast water reports for the Coast Guard for its management purposes. The DFW must take steps prior to July 1, 2002 to reduce or eliminate the costs of reporting.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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