

HB 291 -- STATE WATER PATROL FUNDING

SPONSOR: Cooper (155)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Ways and Means by a vote of 15 to 0.

This bill increases the fee for a certificate of number when registering the following vessels:

- (1) Under 16 feet in length from \$10 to \$20;
- (2) 16 feet to 26 feet in length from \$20 to \$55;
- (3) 26 feet to 40 feet in length from \$30 to \$100; and
- (4) 40 feet and longer from \$40 to \$150.

The first \$2 million collected annually for numbering will be deposited into the General Revenue Fund. All fees collected in excess of \$2 million will be deposited into the newly created Missouri State Water Patrol Fund. Moneys in this fund, subject to appropriation, will be used solely for the expenses of the State Water Patrol. Revenue remaining in the fund at the end of the biennium will not revert to the credit of the General Revenue Fund.

When applying for or renewing a vessel's certificate of number, from the state or for a vessel documented with the United States Coast Guard, the owner must submit proof that all personal property taxes owed or previously owed on the vessel have been paid or that no taxes were due.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Income on General Revenue Fund of \$109,023 in FY 2006, \$137,357 in FY 2007, and \$137,357 in FY 2008. Estimated Income on Other State Funds of \$2,422,721 in FY 2006, \$2,907,265 in FY 2007, and \$2,907,265 in FY 2008.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill designates needed funds to support the State Water Patrol through increased fees on boats. The water patrol needs to provide adequate salaries to retain and attract qualified officers, and increased funds could be used for newer boats and equipment. Tourism is Missouri's second largest industry, and the Lake of the Ozarks is the third most dangerous body of water in the United States. A 1984 crime study recommended increasing the number of officers to a total of 125. Currently, there are 81 active officers. More officers could provide more boating safety programs, increase safety on Missouri's waterways, and provide assistance to local law enforcement.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cooper (155); Missouri Water Patrol Association; Heartland Pro-AM Tournament

Association, Incorporated; Camden County Sheriff; and Lake Ozark Marine Dealers Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill provided technical information.

Others testifying on the bill was State Water Patrol.

Karla Strobel, Legislative Analyst