

5522

Sponsor(s): Senators T. Sheldon, Brandland, Carlson and Hale

Brief Description: Creating a pilot project to study the feasibility of privatizing liquor retailing.

SB 5522 - DIGEST

(SEE ALSO PROPOSED 1ST SUB)

Declares an intent for the franchising of the retail sale of liquor to result in a system that is more efficient than public sector retailing.

Intends to initiate a pilot project to close a portion of the state's liquor retail stores, to monitor the impact of the store closures on state revenues, and to consider closing more state liquor stores in the future if the initial store closures yield benefits for the state.

Provides that, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the board is directed to implement the closure of twenty-five state liquor stores by December 31, 2005. When determining which state liquor stores to close, the board must give due consideration to the timing of the expiration of liquor store leases, as well as input from the task force.

Provides that a state liquor store may not be closed unless at least one franchise exists in the franchise area covered by the liquor store, or unless the task force determines that reasonable alternative access is available to persons who previously purchased spirits from the state liquor store that is closing.

Declares that nothing in this act and RCW 66.08.150 shall be construed to eliminate liquor vendors as referenced in RCW 66.08.050, also known as contract agency stores, or to obligate liquor vendors to place bids for their stores.

Requires the task force created by this act to make a recommendation to the legislature by December 31, 2007, on whether the franchise system should be expanded, kept at its current level, or discontinued and replaced by the former state liquor store system.