

Joint Transportation Committee -- Study on Aviation Search and Rescue

Recent Legislative Proposals and Studies related to WSDOT Aviation and SAR activities

2001:

The 2001 Transportation Budget (ESSB 5327) included a proviso that directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to conduct a performance audit to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of removing the entire aviation division from WSDOT.

2002:

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) completed a study evaluating the option of removing the Aviation division from WSDOT and creating a separate Department of Aviation. They concluded the Aviation Division should remain at WSDOT.

2003:

A WSDOT Search & Rescue Study Team developed recommendations to consider "efficiencies, issues and emerging trends" in aviation SAR. Study recommendations focused on SAR operation and protocol improvements within the existing WSDOT aviation program. Recommendations included developing a comprehensive SAR plan, improving the SAR volunteer base, and developing an outreach and communications strategy for SAR.

2007:

A Decision Package was submitted by WSDOT to move SAR responsibility from WSDOT to the state Military Department. During the budget process the topic of moving Aviation SAR was discussed by various parties including the Governor's Office, Washington State Patrol, the state Military Department, and WSDOT. No funding was proposed to be transferred with the duties of aviation SAR and this proposal did not move forward. Reasons given by WSDOT for the proposed transfer included consolidation of all SAR responsibilities, cost savings to the state, more revenue for other aviation activities, removal of duplication of effort, and more effective coordination of SAR. WSDOT acknowledged there would be a need for a specialized staffer for aviation SAR wherever it was housed.

Draft Bill 0123.1

This bill proposed transferring responsibility for aviation SAR to the state Military Department and was part of the WSDOT budget decision package.

2012:

Senate Bill 6430 proposed transferring responsibility for aviation SAR to the state Military Department.

The 2012 Transportation Budget (ESHB 2190) included a proviso directing the Joint Transportation Committee to examine SAR in Washington.