

SB 920 -- STATE WATER PATROL

SPONSOR: Caskey (Cooper, 155)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Transportation and Motor Vehicles by a vote of 15 to 5.

This bill expands the jurisdiction of the State Water Patrol. Under current law, the water patrol's jurisdiction includes only the state's waterways and adjacent land. The bill grants the water patrol the power to arrest a person anywhere in the state when they witness a crime taking place. In addition, when there is probable cause to believe that a person has committed a crime within the water patrol's jurisdiction, the officer may arrest that person anywhere in the state. If practicable, the officer must notify local law enforcement prior to making the arrest. The bill allows water patrol officers to request search warrants anywhere in the state, provided they notify the sheriff of the request.

Finally, the bill expands the definition of "peace officer" as it relates to searches and seizures to include members of the water patrol.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2005, FY 2006, and FY 2007.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the expanded arrest powers of the State Water Patrol will allow them to better perform their duties and to assist other law enforcement officers.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Caskey; and State Water Patrol.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Robert Triplett, Legislative Analyst