

RCW 43.372.005 Findings—Purpose. (1) The legislature finds that:

(a) Native American tribes have depended on the state's marine waters and its resources for countless generations and continue to do so for cultural, spiritual, economic, and subsistence purposes.

(b) The state has long demonstrated a strong commitment to protecting the state's marine waters, which are abundant in natural resources, contain a treasure of biological diversity, and are a source of multiple uses by the public supporting the economies of nearby communities as well as the entire state. These multiple uses include, but are not limited to: Marine-based industries and activities such as cargo, fuel, and passenger transportation; commercial, recreational, and tribal fishing; shellfish aquaculture; telecommunications and energy infrastructure; seafood processing; tourism; scientific research; and many related goods and services. These multiple uses as well as new emerging uses, such as renewable ocean energy, constitute a management challenge for sustaining resources and coordinating state decision making in a proactive, comprehensive and ecosystem-based manner.

(c) Washington's marine waters are part of a west coast-wide large marine ecosystem known as the California current, and the Puget Sound and Columbia river estuaries constitute two of the three largest estuaries that are part of this large marine ecosystem. Puget Sound and the Columbia river are estuaries of national significance under the national estuary program, and the outer coast includes the Olympic national marine sanctuary.

(d) Washington is working in cooperation with the states of Oregon and California and federal agencies on ocean and ocean health management issues through the west coast governors' agreement on ocean health, and with the government of British Columbia on shared waters management issues through the British Columbia-Washington coastal and ocean task force.

(e) Washington has initiated comprehensive management programs to protect and promote compatible uses of these waters. These include: The development of a comprehensive ecosystem-based management plan known as the Puget Sound action agenda; shoreline plans for shorelines around the state; management plans for state-owned aquatic lands and their associated waters statewide; and watershed and salmon recovery management plans in the upland areas of Puget Sound, the coast, and the Columbia river. Data and data management tools have also been developed to support these management and planning activities, such as the coastal atlas managed by the department of ecology and the shore zone database managed by the department of natural resources.

(f) For marine waters specifically, Washington has formed several mechanisms to improve coordination and management. A legislatively authorized task force formed by the governor identified priority recommendations for improving state management of ocean resources through Washington's ocean action plan in 2006. The governor further formed an ongoing interagency team that assists the department of ecology in implementing these recommendations. There is an extensive network of marine resources committees within Puget Sound and on the outer coast and the Columbia river to promote and support local involvement identifying and conducting local priority marine projects and some have been involved in local planning and management. Through the Olympic coast intergovernmental policy council, the state has also formalized its working relationship with coastal tribes and the

federal government in the management of the Olympic coast national marine sanctuary.

(g) Reports by the United States commission on oceans policy, the Pew oceans commission, and the joint oceans commission initiative recommend the adoption of a national ocean policy under which states and coastal communities would have a principal role in developing and implementing ecosystem-based management of marine waters. Acting on these recommendations, the president of the United States recently formed an interagency ocean policy task force charged with developing a national ocean policy and a framework for marine spatial planning that involves all governmental levels, including state, tribal, and local governments. To further develop and implement such a planning framework, it is anticipated that federal cooperation and support will be available to coastal states that are engaged in marine and coastal resource management and planning, including marine spatial planning.

(2) The purpose of this chapter is to build upon existing statewide Puget Sound, coastal, and Columbia river efforts. When resources become available, the state intends to augment the marine spatial component of existing plans and to improve the coordination among state agencies in the development and implementation of marine management plans.

(3) It is also the purpose of this chapter to establish policies to guide state agencies and local governments when exercising jurisdiction over proposed uses and activities in these waters. Specifically, in conducting marine spatial planning, and in augmenting existing marine management plans with marine spatial planning components, the state must:

(a) Continue to recognize the rights of native American tribes regarding marine natural resources;

(b) Base all planning on best available science. This includes identifying gaps in existing information, recommend a strategy for acquiring science needed to strengthen marine spatial plans, and create a process to adjust plans once additional scientific information is available;

(c) Coordinate with all stakeholders, including marine resources committees and nongovernmental organizations, that are significantly involved in the collection of scientific information, ecosystem protection and restoration, or other activities related to marine spatial planning;

(d) Recognize that marine ecosystems span tribal, state, and international boundaries and that planning has to be coordinated with all entities with jurisdiction or authority in order to be effective;

(e) Establish or further promote an ecosystem-based management approach including linking marine spatial plans to adjacent nearshore and upland spatial or ecosystem-based plans;

(f) Ensure that all marine spatial plans are linked to measurable environmental outcomes;

(g) Establish a performance management system to monitor implementation of any new marine spatial plan;

(h) Establish an ocean stewardship policy that takes into account the existing natural, social, cultural, historic, and economic uses;

(i) Recognize that commercial, tribal, and recreational fisheries, and shellfish aquaculture are an integral part of our state's culture and contribute substantial economic benefits;

(j) Value biodiversity and ecosystem health, and protect special, sensitive, or unique estuarine and marine life and habitats, including

important spawning, rearing, and migration areas for finfish, marine mammals, and productive shellfish habitats;

(k) Integrate this planning with existing plans and ongoing planning in the same marine waters and provide additional mechanisms for improving coordination and aligning management;

(l) Promote recovery of listed species under state and federal endangered species acts plans pursuant to those plans; and

(m) Fulfill the state's public trust and tribal treaty trust responsibilities in managing the state's ocean waters in a sustainable manner for current and future generations. [2010 c 145 s 1.]