
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 4409

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Representatives Thompson, Reams, Bush, Mielke, Sherstad, Pennington, Sheldon, Grant, Kastama, McMorris and Mastin

Read first time 02/25/97. Referred to Committee on Government Reform & Land Use.

1 WHEREAS, The legislature recognizes the importance of preserving
2 the environment and protecting critical areas to ensure that the state
3 retains its natural beauty and diversity of wildlife; and

4 WHEREAS, The legislature recognizes the complexity of the challenge
5 of balancing the interests of preserving the natural surroundings while
6 ensuring that people may alter their surroundings in harmony with the
7 environment if they are given proper guidance and direction by
8 definitions set forth in the laws of the state; and

9 WHEREAS, State law defines wetlands extremely broadly to include
10 areas saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency or duration
11 sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for
12 life in saturated soil conditions but provides little accurate criteria
13 for determining that wetlands conditions exist; and

14 WHEREAS, The current definition of wetlands places too great an
15 emphasis on temporary rather than long-term conditions; and

16 WHEREAS, Local governments interpret the definition of wetlands so
17 broadly that the residents of this state are unduly encumbered and the
18 quality of their lives threatened by arbitrary decisions with respect
19 to wetlands classification or designation; and

20 WHEREAS, The economic well-being of the state overall is threatened
21 by lack of specificity in the definition of wetlands;

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the Senate of the state of
2 Washington, the House of Representatives concurring, That a joint
3 select subcommittee on wetlands be established to review the statutory
4 definition of wetlands and related issues associated with the
5 definition of wetlands to find a more reasonable, workable definition
6 that provides guidance and notice to property owners; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee consist of eight
8 members, four members each selected by the President of the Senate and
9 the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee report its findings and
11 recommendations to the legislature at the regular session held in 1998.

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