
Local Government Committee

HB 1413

Brief Description: Changing the definition of floodway in the shoreline management act.

Sponsors: Representatives Eddy, Simpson and Curtis; by request of Department of Ecology.

Brief Summary of Bill

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amends the Shoreline Management Act definition of "floodway." |
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Hearing Date: 1/30/07

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) governs uses of state shorelines. The SMA enunciates state policy to provide for shoreline management by planning for and fostering "all reasonable and appropriate uses." The SMA prioritizes public shoreline access and enjoyment and creates preference criteria listed in prioritized order that must be used by state and local governments in regulating shoreline uses.

The SMA involves a cooperative regulatory approach between local governments and the state. At the local level, SMA regulations are developed in local shoreline master programs (master programs). All counties and cities with shorelines of the state are required to adopt master programs that regulate land use activities in shoreline areas of the state. Counties and cities are also required to enforce their master programs within their jurisdictions. Master programs must be consistent with guidelines adopted by the Department of Ecology (DOE), and the programs, and segments of or amendments to, become effective when approved by the DOE.

The SMA includes numerous definitions and concepts that guide state and local governments in implementing the act. As defined in the SMA, "floodway" means those portions of the area of a river valley lying streamward from the outer limits of a watercourse upon which flood waters are carried during periods of flooding that occur with reasonable regularity, although not necessarily annually. Floodways are identified, under normal conditions, by changes in surface soil conditions or changes in types or quality of vegetative ground cover condition. Floodways must

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not include lands that can reasonably be expected to be protected from flood waters by flood control devices maintained by or under license from the federal government, the state, or political subdivisions of the state.

The SMA does not contain specific requirements that local governments must satisfy for floodways, but administrative rules adopted by the DOE for reducing flood hazards include provisions that apply to uses and activities that may be appropriate or necessary within floodways.

Summary of Bill:

The SMA definition of "floodway" is amended to specify that a floodway is the area of a river valley that conveys flood waters with reasonable regularity, although not necessarily annually. The definition further specifies that, at a minimum, the floodway is that which has been established in Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) flood insurance rate maps or FEMA floodway maps. Other data and information, including topography, changes in soil or vegetation, and other indicators of past flooding may be used to define and map a floodway that meets the objectives of the SMA. Floodways must not include those lands that can reasonably be expected to be protected from 100-year flood waters by flood control devices maintained by or under license from the federal government, the state, or political subdivisions of the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.