
Ecology & Parks Committee

SB 6531

Brief Description: Addressing environmental mitigation in highway construction.

Sponsors: Senator Haugen.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Transportation to consider using public land first when selecting sites to meet highway construction environmental mitigation requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act and the State Environmental Policy Act.

Hearing Date: 2/22/08

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

Background:

Under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is required to review unavoidable environmental impacts of transportation construction projects and identify possible mitigation measures. Mitigation may include enhancing existing environments or creating new habitats.

Under the Growth Management Act certain counties and cities are required to designate agricultural lands that are of long term commercial significance and develop conservation strategies applicable to those lands.

Summary of Bill:

The WSDOT will consider using public land first when selecting sites to meet highway construction environmental mitigation requirements under the NEPA and the SEPA. If public lands are not available, the WSDOT should avoid any net loss of agricultural lands that have a designation of long-term commercial significance.

Appropriation: None.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 20, 2008.

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