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**General Government Appropriations  
Committee**

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**HB 3132**

**Brief Description:** Eliminating the Columbia River Gorge Compact.

**Sponsors:** Representative Van De Wege.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Eliminates the Columbia River Gorge Compact.

**Hearing Date:** 2/4/10

**Staff:** Leslie Ryan-Connelly (786-7166) and Owen Rowe (786-7391).

**Background:**

The Columbia River Natural Scenic Area (Scenic Area) was established in 1986 by Congress with two main purposes:

- to protect and enhance the scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and
- to protect and support the economy of the area by encouraging growth to occur in urban areas and allowing future economic development consistent with resource protection.

The Scenic Area covers approximately 300,000 acres. To facilitate cooperation between the states and the federal government, the Columbia River National Scenic Area Act (Act) required the creation of the Columbia River Gorge Commission (Gorge Commission) through an interstate agreement between Oregon and Washington. The Gorge Commission has 13 members: three appointed by each of the governors of Oregon and Washington, one appointed by each of the six Gorge counties, and one (non-voting) representative from the United States Forest Service (Forest Service). The Gorge Commission is funded equally by Oregon and Washington.

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*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.*

The Act also required adoption of a Scenic Area Management Plan (Plan). The Plan was first developed in 1991 and approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1992. The most recent update of the plan was in 2007. The Gorge Commission administers the Plan and provides technical assistance to five of the six counties (e.g., Clark and Skamania in Washington State) that implement ordinances under the Plan. The Gorge Commission directly administers and enforces the Plan in Klickitat County.

The Scenic Area Management Plan includes guidelines and land use designations for land within the Scenic Area. The Plan provides direction on resource protection and enhancement, recreation and economic development, and establishes the roles of the Gorge Commission, USDA, and Indian tribal governments. Counties must develop local development ordinances that comply with the Management Plan. Designated urban areas are excluded from the Management Plan regulations.

The Forest Service provides technical assistance to the Gorge Commission through review of changes to the Management Plan and funding for economic and recreational development programs. The Forest Service also acquires land to fulfill resource needs as identified in the Management Plan. To benefit counties, acquired lands are included in a county's share of timber receipts from the National Forest System lands. Also, the Act provides for payments in lieu of taxes to a county for a certain period of time after a property is acquired by the Forest Service.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Columbia River Gorge Compact is repealed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Preliminary fiscal note available.

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