

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6554

As of January 27, 2010

Title: An act relating to extending the Washington biodiversity council.

Brief Description: Extending the Washington biodiversity council.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen and Gordon.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/27/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: In 2002 the Legislature passed SB 6400, which created a temporary Biodiversity Conservation Committee to develop recommendations for the establishment of a framework for the development and implementation of a statewide biodiversity conservation strategy that replaces existing single-species or single-resource protection programs.

In 2004 the Governor issued an executive order creating Washington Biodiversity Council (Council) through the year 2007. The Governor extended the Council through June 30, 2010, through a later executive order. The Council consists of representation including the Governor, state agencies, local governments, federal agencies, tribal governments, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations. The executive orders assigned the Council with duties including:

- developing a 30 year, comprehensive biodiversity strategy for the state;
- completing an assessment of landowner incentives programs; and
- conducting outreach and education on biodiversity.

Summary of Bill: The Council is established in statute and continued through August 1, 2015. The Council is composed of up to 24 members, including representation from state agencies, tribes, local governments, federal agencies, private landowners, conservation organizations, and business interests. The Council is administratively located in the Recreation and Conservation Office. State agencies represented on the Council must participate on the council, integrate biodiversity strategy implementation into specified agency activities, and provide access to relevant data.

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 Council's statutory duties include:

- leading the development, implementation, and adaptive management of biodiversity conservation strategies;
- conducting outreach and education on biodiversity and its importance;
- coordinating biodiversity conservation activities conducted by agencies and other organizations;
- measuring and reporting progress, and ensuring accountability regarding biodiversity strategy implementation; and
- providing the Legislature with a biennial update on its progress.

The term biodiversity is defined to mean the variety of different plants, animals, and microorganisms and the ecosystems and processes they form.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Council offers a tool to think about conservation more holistically, instead of species by species. It provides a valuable forum where government, the private sector, and conservation organizations come together to talk about and coordinate their conservation actions. The Council has done significant work to put a biodiversity strategy together, and needs to help implement it.

OTHER: The Council has been tasked by Executive Order to serve as a leader on biodiversity in the state. It serves an important need. A holistic approach to natural resources management is important, and the Council should work to address concerns about spartina control activities.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Mike Mosman, Port Blakely Tree Farms; Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy; Josh Weiss, Biodiversity Council.

OTHER: Clay Sprague, Department of Natural Resources; Lynn Helbrecht, Biodiversity Council.