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SENATE BILL 6554

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State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Senators Jacobsen and Gordon

Read first time 01/18/10. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources,  
Ocean & Recreation.

1 AN ACT Relating to extending the Washington biodiversity council;  
2 adding new sections to chapter 43.131 RCW; and adding a new chapter to  
3 Title 79A RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

6 (a) Biodiversity is essential to Washington residents' health and  
7 to our economic and cultural future. Washington's diverse ecosystems  
8 are the foundation of our vital natural resource economies that produce  
9 food, fiber, fuel, building materials, and medicines. Our ecosystems  
10 make Washington a desirable place to live, recreate, and establish new  
11 enterprises and they provide services such as flood control, water  
12 purification, crop pollination, and carbon storage to reduce the  
13 effects of climate change. Sustaining our biodiversity can keep us  
14 healthy in the face of change.

15 (b) As our population continues to increase, Washington is  
16 experiencing a dramatic decline in native biodiversity due to habitat  
17 fragmentation, degradation, and conversion to other land uses. Threats  
18 to species and critical ecosystems have resulted in endangered species

1 listings and the spread of invasive species, which can disrupt natural  
2 processes, our communities, and long-term resource management.

3 (c) The state biodiversity council, a successful public-private  
4 partnership created by Executive Order 04-02, has provided consistent  
5 leadership in sustaining Washington's biodiversity since 2004.

6 (d) The state biodiversity council has developed a science-based  
7 biodiversity conservation strategy that holds great promise for  
8 incorporating biodiversity within a multitude of programs including:  
9 Land use planning; voluntary landowner conservation incentives and  
10 assistance programs; and a host of existing federal, state, and local  
11 conservation funding programs. The council developed the strategy  
12 collaboratively with stakeholders and took into account the needs of  
13 communities and working landowners.

14 (e) State agencies and nongovernmental organizations have  
15 contributed to the state biodiversity council's work with existing  
16 staff, financial contributions, and other resources.

17 (f) The state has much to gain from implementing the strategy, but  
18 effective implementation will require a guiding entity.

19 (2) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to extend the  
20 Washington biodiversity council to sustain leadership in conserving the  
21 state's ecosystems and natural heritage.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
23 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

24 (1) "Biodiversity" means the variety of different plants, animals,  
25 and microorganisms and the ecosystems and processes they form.

26 (2) "Council" means the Washington biodiversity council created in  
27 section 3 of this act.

28 (3) "Scorecard" means a group of environmental indicators that are  
29 developed by the council to measure and report the progress toward  
30 biodiversity conservation goals.

31 (4) "Strategy" means any biodiversity conservation strategy or  
32 strategies developed or implemented by the council.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The Washington biodiversity council is  
34 created to provide ongoing leadership, coordination, and accountability  
35 in the development and implementation of science-based strategies to  
36 guide effective conservation of the state's biodiversity.

1 (2) The council is a public-private partnership consisting of no  
2 more than twenty-four members appointed by the governor in compliance  
3 with (a) and (b) of this subsection:

4 (a) One-half of the members appointed by the governor must  
5 represent nongovernmental entities including private landowners,  
6 conservation organizations, business interests, educators, and the  
7 general public; and

8 (b) One-half of the members appointed by the governor must  
9 represent governmental entities including tribes, the department of  
10 fish and wildlife, the department of ecology, the department of natural  
11 resources, the Puget Sound partnership, the state parks and recreation  
12 commission, the department of transportation, the conservation  
13 commission, the department of community, trade, and economic  
14 development, local governments, and federal agencies.

15 (3) Councilmembers must be appointed for terms of four years.

16 (4) Members whose terms expire shall continue to serve until  
17 reappointed or replaced by a new member.

18 (5) The council may develop governance policies and procedures.

19 (6) The recreation and conservation office shall administer all  
20 staff, grants, contracts, and expenses for the council.

21 (7) Members of the council shall be reimbursed for travel expenses  
22 as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The council shall work to promote  
24 biodiversity conservation, explain its vital importance in Washington's  
25 economy and our quality of life, and encourage citizens to advance the  
26 stewardship of our natural heritage for future generations.

27 (2) The primary duties of the council include:

28 (a) Leading the development, implementation, and adaptive  
29 management of biodiversity conservation strategies;

30 (b) Conducting outreach and education on biodiversity and its  
31 importance to our quality of life;

32 (c) Serving as a convener to coordinate and advance collaborative  
33 approaches;

34 (d) Promoting efficiencies, innovation, and developing integrated  
35 approaches to conservation by coordinating:

36 (i) The work of agencies and other organizations working to  
37 implement biodiversity conservation strategies;

- 1 (ii) Agency budget requests that affect biodiversity conservation;  
2 and  
3 (iii) The integration of conservation activities between agencies  
4 and other organizations;  
5 (e) Measuring and reporting progress through a statewide  
6 biodiversity scorecard;  
7 (f) Ensuring accountability for biodiversity strategy  
8 implementation.

9 (3) The council may establish a science advisory panel to ensure  
10 that council decisions and strategies are based on sound science.

11 (4) The council may establish working groups as needed to create  
12 more coordinated and cohesive approaches to biodiversity conservation.

13 (5) The council may take actions to create a private nonprofit  
14 corporation that would assist the council in implementing biodiversity  
15 strategies by raising money or other resources or by performing other  
16 activities consistent with council strategies.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The state agencies named in section  
18 3(2)(b) of this act shall:

19 (a) Participate on the council;

20 (b) Integrate biodiversity conservation strategy implementation  
21 into the agencies' goals, objectives, land acquisition strategies, and  
22 conservation and education program work plans;

23 (c) Ensure that appropriate staff participate in any scientific  
24 advisory panel and working groups established by the council;

25 (d) Create biodiversity conservation efficiencies by integrating  
26 state conservation efforts across agencies and jurisdictions consistent  
27 with council strategies;

28 (e) Work collaboratively with the councilmembers to implement  
29 strategies; and

30 (f) Provide access to disclosable data as needed for biodiversity  
31 scorecards and other reports.

32 (2) The council shall work with the Washington state conservation  
33 commission established under RCW 89.08.030 on how to utilize the strong  
34 statewide network of conservation districts and landowners to promote  
35 and implement the council's landowner incentive and assistance  
36 strategy, public education strategy, and other pertinent strategies.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 6.**    Beginning January 1, 2011, and every two  
2 years thereafter, the council shall provide the legislature and the  
3 governor with a report on strategy implementation, progress of efforts  
4 to integrate conservation efforts across agencies, and the biennial  
5 biodiversity scorecard.

6        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 7.**    A new section is added to chapter 43.131 RCW  
7 to read as follows:

8        The Washington biodiversity council and its powers and duties shall  
9 be terminated August 1, 2015, as provided in section 8 of this act.

10       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 8.**    A new section is added to chapter 43.131 RCW  
11 to read as follows:

12       The following acts or parts of acts, as now existing or hereafter  
13 amended, are each repealed, effective August 1, 2016:

- 14       (1) Section 1 of this act;
- 15       (2) Section 2 of this act;
- 16       (3) Section 3 of this act;
- 17       (4) Section 4 of this act;
- 18       (5) Section 5 of this act; and
- 19       (6) Section 6 of this act.

20       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 9.**    Sections 1 through 6 of this act constitute  
21 a new chapter in Title 79A RCW.

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