

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2428

As Reported By House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to the watershed coordinating council.

Brief Description: Requiring the watershed coordinating council to implement a watershed restoration pilot project.

Sponsors: Representative Pennington.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 1/24/96, 1/30/96 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Chairman; Buck, Vice Chairman; Pennington, Vice Chairman; Regala, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beeksma; Elliot; Hatfield; Jacobsen; Keiser; Sheldon; Stevens; B. Thomas; L. Thomas and Thompson.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Basich, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Rick Anderson (786-7114).

Background: There are several hundred federal, state, local, tribal, non-profit, and volunteer efforts to restore watersheds. Legislation enacted in 1993 created the Watershed Coordinating Council to coordinate state agency watershed planning and implementation activities. The council was charged with a number of specific directives, including identifying ways to

- 1) overcome barriers to state agency cooperation in watershed planning and implementation; and
- 2) minimize state agency duplication and overlap.

The council is comprised of the Commissioner of Public Lands or the commissioner's designee, and the director or designee from the following departments: Transportation; Agriculture; Ecology; Fish and Wildlife; Health; Community, Trade and Economic Development; the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation; the Puget Sound Water Quality Authority; and the Conservation Commission. The council expires June 30, 1997.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Watershed Coordinating Council is directed to establish interagency teams in at least four watersheds, where there is a local willingness to participate.

In assisting local governments, the interagency teams are specifically directed to

- 1) establish an information bank;
- 2) provide volunteer training;
- 3) develop a prioritized list of restoration activities; and
- 4) establish an ongoing organizational framework to implement restoration activities.

The interagency teams are also directed to consolidate permit requirements for restoration projects and to resolve policy conflicts that may exist between the state agencies on the interagency teams.

The Watershed Coordinating Council is required to submit a report to the Legislature on the interagency teams by June 30, 1997.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill uses the term watershed activities instead of watershed restoration activities. The substitute bill also deletes a reference to the WSU Cooperative Extension Service as the entity to provide volunteer training services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: There is a very great need for coordination among state agencies. This bill will help to coordinate state agency actions in assisting local governments. The bill implements a recommendation made by the Watershed Coordinating Council.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Bob Nichols, Office of Financial Management; and Ric Abbett, Trout Unlimited (pro).