

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2578

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Natural Resources, February 23, 1996

**Title:** An act relating to agricultural grazing on state-owned and managed lands.

**Brief Description:** Managing grazing lands.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Fuhrman, Basich, Buck, McMorris and Thompson).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources: 2/22/96, 2/23/96 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Drew, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Hargrove, Haugen, Morton, Oke, Owen, Snyder, Strannigan and Swecker.

**Staff:** Vic Moon (786-7469)

**Background:** In 1993, the Legislature directed the (then separate) departments of Fisheries and Wildlife to develop goals to preserve, protect, and perpetuate wildlife and fish on shrub steppe habitat or on lands that are currently agricultural lands, rangelands, or grazable woodlands. The Legislature then directed the Conservation Commission to assemble a technical advisory committee to develop standards that achieve the goals developed by Fisheries and Wildlife. The technical advisory committee and the Conservation Commission completed their work on the ecosystems standards in December 1994.

The same 1993 legislation directed the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Wildlife to implement practices necessary to meet the Conservation Commission ecosystem standards on the agricultural and grazing lands managed by the two agencies. Agricultural and grazing leases issued after December 31, 1994, for these state-owned lands are subject to practices to achieve the ecosystems standards. Application of the standards to privately-owned lands is strictly voluntary.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The Conservation Commission ecosystem standards are defined as desired ecological conditions. The standards are not intended to prescribe practices. Land managers are encouraged to use an adaptive management approach in selecting and implementing practices that work towards meeting the standards, based on the best available science and evaluation tools. The standards are to be achieved by applying appropriate land management practices on riparian lands and on uplands to reach the desired ecological conditions.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources must work with their lessees and permittees in a collaborative process with regard to the ecosystem standards. The land manager and lessee or permittee are to look at the land together and make every effort to reach agreement on management and resource objectives for the land under consideration. They are then to discuss management options and make every effort to reach agreement on which of the available options will be used to achieve the agreed-upon objectives. No land manager or owner ever gives up his or her management prerogative. Efforts are to be made to make land management plans economically feasible for landowners, managers, and lessees, and to make the land management plan compatible with the lessee's entire operation. Coordinated resource management planning is encouraged where multiple ownerships or multiple management practices are involved.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is to consider multiple use, including grazing, on lands owned or managed by the department where it is compatible with the management objectives of the land. The Department of Natural Resources is to allow multiple use on lands owned or managed by the department where multiple use is compatible with the department's multiple use statutes. All state agricultural lands, grazing lands, and grazable woodlands are to be managed in keeping with the statutory and constitutional mandates under which the two agencies operate.

**Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:** Technical changes are made.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This is an important bill to clarify SHB 1309 (1993).

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Scott Barr (pro); Vicki Christiansen, DNR (pro); Ed Manary, Department of Fish and Wildlife (pro).