

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5351

As Passed Senate, March 13, 1997

Title: An act relating to small scale prospecting and mining.

Brief Description: Limiting the regulations of small scale mining.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Benton, Strannigan, Oke, Anderson, Swecker, Zarelli and Rossi).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 2/20/97, 3/4/97 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 3/13/97, 43-6.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5351 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Jacobsen, Morton, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

Background: Mining activities within the high water mark of streams, rivers, and other water bodies of the state are regulated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife through the hydraulic permit process. Exemptions from the permit process are provided to persons who pan for gold using hand tools. More extensive mining activities in streams or rivers require a hydraulic permit and are subject to department regulation.

Miners who prospect or mine in rivers and streams desire less regulation from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Summary of Bill: Small scale mineral prospecting– is defined as mining with pans, mini-rocker boxes, concentrators and sluice boxes. These mining activities do not require a hydraulic permit if streambanks are not undercut or live-rooted woody plants are not disturbed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Small scale mining activities are subject to unnecessary regulation by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Michael Duncan, Boeing Employees Prospecting, Washington Prospectors, GPAA (pro); David Rutan, Washington Prospectors and Miners Ad-Hoc Committee (pro); Chuck Cox, Washington Prospectors Mining Associated (pro); David Hogg, WPMA (pro).