
HOUSE BILL 2186

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Representatives Linville, Regala, Chandler and Blalock

Read first time 02/25/97. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Ecology.

1 AN ACT Relating to identifying critical ecological functions within
2 a water resource inventory area; adding a new section to chapter 90.71
3 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

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

6 (a) Environmental laws, rules, and policies to improve water
7 quality have generally been developed in response to specific problems;

8 (b) This case-by-case approach to water quality management has
9 resulted in numerous planning, permit, and funding requirements that
10 are often confusing, contradictory, and inefficient;

11 (c) Lack of integrated water quality policies has resulted in less
12 effective environmental protection, increased taxpayer costs, and
13 considerable public frustration;

14 (d) There is broad consensus that integration of water quality
15 policies is best achieved by adopting a broader geographic approach
16 that is based on how that geographic system works;

17 (e) Scientific knowledge, technology, and data is currently
18 available to identify the critical biological and physical functions of
19 geographic systems, such as watersheds. However, this knowledge,

1 technology, and data is scattered among many federal, state, local, and
2 private entities; and

3 (f) The Puget Sound action team was organized to coordinate
4 federal, state, local, and private efforts across a broad geographic
5 area.

6 (2) The legislature therefore declares that the action team shall
7 undertake the actions identified in section 2 of this act to enhance
8 the ability of state and local governments to develop environmental
9 regulations that are better integrated and make better use of existing
10 science.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 90.71 RCW
12 to read as follows:

13 (1) The action team shall develop, and thereafter shall
14 periodically update a methodology, using geographic information system
15 maps, to identify critical watershed functions within a water resource
16 inventory area. The methodology must identify, at a minimum:

- 17 (a) Critical watershed functions;
- 18 (b) Areas where critical functions are impaired;
- 19 (c) The causes of function impairment;
- 20 (d) Areas where functions are working properly; and
- 21 (e) Current land uses.

22 (2) The action team shall initiate a case study of at least one
23 Puget Sound water resource inventory area, using the information under
24 subsection (1) of this section, to develop policy recommendations to
25 expedite:

26 (a) Agency decision making on mitigation proposals other than
27 traditional on-site, in-kind exchanges; and

28 (b) Preparation of plans required under chapters 36.70A, 86.12, and
29 90.58 RCW. Recommendations under this subsection shall include
30 specific changes to state laws and rules.

31 (3) In developing policy recommendations under this section, the
32 action team shall involve all interested units of local government and
33 may involve any other interested group or person.

34 (4) As used in this section, the following definitions apply.

35 (a) "Water resource inventory area" has the same meaning as in WAC
36 173-500-040.

37 (b) "Critical watershed function" means any geological,
38 hydrological, or biological function that preserves, protects, or

1 enhances water quality, water quantity, fish and wildlife, or flood
2 protection.

3 (5) The policy recommendations under subsection (2) of this section
4 shall be submitted to the appropriate standing committees of the
5 legislature by December 1, 1999.

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