
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5351

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

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

Read first time 03/05/97.

1 AN ACT Relating to small scale prospecting and mining; adding a new
2 section to chapter 75.20 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that small scale
5 prospecting and mining is an important part of the heritage of the
6 state. The legislature further finds that small scale prospecting and
7 mining provide economic benefits to the state, and help to meet the
8 national security demand and industrial demand for minerals. The
9 legislature further finds that it is critical that small scale miners
10 and prospectors be allowed access to open public lands in the state.
11 The legislature further finds that mineral prospecting and mining
12 activities can be conducted in a manner that is consistent with fish
13 habitat and fish-life population. Now, therefore, the legislature
14 declares that small scale prospecting and mining must not be
15 unreasonably regulated. The legislature further declares that all
16 restrictions or regulations of small scale prospecting and mining
17 activities must be based on sound scientific evidence and applicable
18 documentation supporting the need for such restrictions.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 75.20 RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 (1) Small scale mineral prospecting using gold pans, mini-rocker
4 boxes, and nonmotorized sluice boxes shall not require written approval
5 under this chapter if the prospecting is conducted in accordance with
6 provisions established in the department's most recent gold and fish
7 pamphlet.

8 (2) By December 31, 1997, the department shall adopt rules to
9 regulate small scale mineral prospecting activities subject to this
10 chapter. The department shall develop the rules in cooperation with
11 the recreational mining community and other interested parties,
12 including consideration of a general permit for motorized mining
13 activities.

14 (3) Within two months of adoption of the rules, the department
15 shall distribute an updated gold and fish pamphlet that describes
16 methods of mineral prospecting that are consistent with the
17 department's rule. The pamphlet shall be written to clearly indicate
18 the prospecting methods that require written approval under this
19 chapter and the prospecting methods that require compliance with the
20 pamphlet.

--- END ---