

# ***ANALYSIS OF HB 1302***

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***House Agriculture & Ecology Committee***

***February 3, 1999***

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Re-authorizing the Permit Assistance Center

**BACKGROUND:**

The Permit Assistance Center was established within the Department of Ecology in 1995. The Center is designed to provide assistance to businesses and public agencies in order to facilitate their compliance with the state's environmental quality laws in an expedited fashion. The Center was also mandated to provide a formal Coordinated Permit Process to coordinate environmental permit processes for applicants with complex projects who may use this process at their option and expense. The Center currently has a staff of 2.6 FTEs and a biennial budget of \$309,000. The legislation establishing the center includes a sunset clause. Without re-authorization, the Center would close on June 30, 1999.

**SUMMARY:**

The repeal clauses are repealed, allowing the center as established in current law to continue operations. The center is required to provide an biennial report to the legislature that: (1) provides policy and operational recommendations for streamlining and coordinating environmental permitting in Washington; (2) summarizes the results of the Center's effort to measure its performance and outcomes; and (3) provides budget accounting.

The regulatory agencies involved in implementing the Center's responsibilities are also authorized to enter into cost-reimbursement agreements with project applicants to recover the costs relating to the implementation of other statutory requirements as they relate to permit review, processing, and coordination.

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*Prepared for the House Agriculture & Ecology Committee  
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