

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1166

As Reported by House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to entities eligible to be project sponsors for salmon recovery funding board grants.

Brief Description: Allowing state agencies to sponsor salmon recovery projects.

Sponsors: Representatives Rockefeller, Buck, Doumit, Pennington and Edwards.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 1/29/01, 2/26/01 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- State agencies are authorized to act as a project sponsor for purposes of obtaining salmon habitat project funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). The project must be included on the habitat project list submitted by the lead entity for the area.
- The state agency must have a local partner for the project that would otherwise qualify as a project sponsor.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Doumit, Democratic Co-Chair; Sump, Republican Co-Chair; Pearson, Republican Vice Chair; Rockefeller, Democratic Vice Chair; Buck, Eickmeyer, Jackley, Murray and Pennington.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives G. Chandler and Ericksen.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

The SRFB provides funding for habitat projects in accordance with a process established by the Legislature. In order to obtain funding from the board, the counties, cities, and tribal governments must jointly designate a lead entity for the area from which a habitat project list will be developed. The lead entity is responsible for: 1) creating a committee to compile a list of habitat projects; 2) ranking of the projects; 3) defining the sequence for project implementation; and 4) submitting the results of this effort to the lead entity as the habitat project list. The lead entity submits the habitat project list to the technical review team associated with the SRFB so the projects can be analyzed and ranked.

When developing the habitat project list, the committee must utilize a critical pathways methodology. As part of the critical pathways methodology, local habitat projects must be identified that sponsors are willing to undertake. Each project must have a written agreement from the landowner on which the project is to be implemented. Project sponsors are responsible, in consultation with the landowner and the technical advisory group, for identifying how the projects will be monitored and evaluated. The SRFB is directed to give a preference to projects that will be implemented by a project sponsor with a successful record of project implementation.

State agencies are not authorized to act as a project sponsor. A project sponsor may be one of the following: 1) county; 2) city; 3) special district tribal government; 4) a combination of such governments through an interlocal agreement, nonprofit organization; or 5) one or more private citizens.

Project sponsors are not always available in an area in which a project has great potential to assist in salmon recovery. State agencies may also have special expertise on a particular type of project, or a proposed project may be on state land.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

State agencies are authorized to act as a project sponsor for purposes of obtaining salmon habitat project funding from the SRFB. The project may only be funded if it is included on the habitat project list submitted by the lead entity for the area. The state agency must also have a local partner for the project that would otherwise qualify as a project sponsor.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Language is added to require the state agency to have a local partner for the project that would otherwise qualify as a project sponsor. The project must also be included on the project list submitted by the lead entity for the area.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (Original bill) This is request legislation by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. There are certain projects that state agencies may be better suited to take the lead on. Lead entities particularly lack data and understanding of problems associated with marine and estuary areas. State agencies can fill this gap. This authority is currently authorized in budget language, and is being used by the Department of Fish and Wildlife to place large woody debris in a stream in the Yakima area. It should not matter who the sponsor of the project is, because they are all evaluated in terms of what benefits they provide. Local lead entities will still prioritize the projects. Requiring state agencies to go through the current competitive process is better than giving state agencies their own separate appropriations for these projects.

(Concerns on original bill) The lead entity should not be bypassed for projects sponsored by a state agency. Local volunteer groups are at their limit financially, and there should be adequate funding to provide a base level of resources to these groups.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Rockefeller, prime sponsor; Representative Doumit; Jim Fox, Inter-Agency Commission for Outdoor Recreation and Salmon Recovery Funding Board; Bruce Wishart, People for Puget Sound; and Tim Smith, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

(With concerns) Dave Williams, Association of Washington Cities; and William O'Neil, Associated General Contractors of Washington.