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## Natural Resources Committee

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### ESSB 6400

**Brief Description:**

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Oke, Kohl-Welles and Kline).

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Directs the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to grant \$45,000 for the creation of the stakeholder-comprised Biodiversity Conservation Committee.
- The Biodiversity Conservation Committee must develop recommendations for the development and implementation of a statewide biodiversity conservation strategy that replaces existing single-species or single-resource protection programs.
- Appropriates \$49,000 for the creation of the Biodiversity Conservation Committee.

**Hearing Date:**

**Staff:** Jason Callahan (786-7117).

**Background:**

Biological diversity, or biodiversity, is the term used to describe the array of plants and animals and the diversity of landscapes on which they depend. There are a number of programs in Washington, both state and non-governmental, that address the state's biodiversity. These programs include the state's Natural Heritage Program housed in the Department of Natural Resources, and the Priority Habitat and Species program of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. In addition, The Nature Conservancy of Washington is developing ecoregional plans to guide its conservation programs.

Currently, there is not a central coordinating entity for existing programs, and there is no single entity responsible for development and implementation of a state biodiversity strategy.

**Summary of Bill:**

A temporary committee is created to develop recommendations for the establishment of the

framework for the development and implementation of a state-wide biodiversity conservation strategy that replaces existing single-species or single-resource protection programs. The committee is funded by a \$45,000 grant issued competitively by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC).

The entity receiving the grant must convene and facilitate the Biodiversity Conservation Committee (committee) that will review existing biodiversity mapping and research programs in Washington and other states. The existing programs that are evaluated may be conducted by both public and private entities.

The committee must develop recommendations by October 1, 2003 for a state biodiversity program that includes: 1) the creation and composition of a standing committee council to oversee the program; 2) the identification of a lead agency to support and facilitate a state biodiversity conservation plan; 3) the methods to improve state coordination and cooperation; 4) the development of consistent definitions of the state's ecoregions and an integration of map and data management; 5) the identification of the state's role for housing and administering biodiversity information; 6) the methods to ensure stakeholder involvement and to provide technical assistance and support to land management; and 7) the identification of time frames and funding needed to implement the programs.

The committee must invite several stakeholder groups to participate, including federal, local, and tribal governments, property owners, businesses, academia, and non-governmental conservation organizations.

An appropriation of \$49,000 is made to the IAC for the grant and implementation costs. The successful applicant for the grant must match at least the amount paid by the state from non-state sources.

**Appropriation:** The sum of \$49,000.

**Fiscal Note:** Not Requested.

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