

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 6400

C 287 L 02
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Developing a statewide biodiversity conservation strategy.

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

Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines
House Committee on Natural Resources
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Biological diversity, or biodiversity, is the term used to describe the genetic differences within a species, 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.

However, there is concern that existing programs are not well coordinated, and that there is no single entity responsible for development and implementation of a state biodiversity strategy.

Summary: The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation must provide a grant for the review of biodiversity programs. The grant must be matched with an equal amount of funding from nonstate sources.

The grantee must convene a biodiversity conservation committee, consisting of representatives from state and federal agencies, local governments, tribes, property owners, business interests, academia, and non-governmental organizations. The committee must review existing biodiversity programs and develop recommendations for a state biodiversity strategy.

The purpose of a state biodiversity strategy is to maintain Washington's biodiversity in perpetuity. The biodiversity strategy must include a standing committee and lead agency to oversee the strategy; an integrated system of data management; public education, outreach, and technical assistance; and the identification of nonregulatory methods to preserve biodiversity.

The biodiversity conservation committee must identify the time frame and cost to implement the biodiversity strategy. The grantee must provide a final report of the review and recommendations of the biodiversity conservation committee to the Legislature by October 1, 2003.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate 39 9
House 55 41 (House amended)
Senate 36 9 (Senate concurred)

Effective: June 13, 2002