

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5088

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, January 28, 2015

Title: An act relating to geological hazards assessment.

Brief Description: Concerning a geological hazards assessment.

Sponsors: Senators Pearson, Hargrove, Honeyford, Parlette, Keiser, Liias, Hobbs, Hatfield, Kohl-Welles, Frockt, Dammeier, Rolfes, Hewitt, Dandel, Fraser, Chase and Conway; by request of Commissioner of Public Lands.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 1/22/15, 1/28/15 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Dandel, Vice Chair; Hatfield, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Hewitt, McAuliffe and Warnick.

Staff: Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

Background: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintains a state geological survey that includes examination of economic products, soils, water resources, and road building materials; and preparation of geological and economic maps. The geological survey must assess and map volcanic, seismic, landslide, and tsunami hazards in Washington.

Light detection and ranging (lidar) mapping is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges – variable distances – to the earth. A lidar instrument principally consists of a laser, a scanner, and a specialized GPS receiver. Airplanes and helicopters are the most commonly used platforms for acquiring lidar data over broad areas. Two types of lidar are topographic – land, and bathymetric – seafloor or riverbed. Lidar systems allow scientists and mapping professionals to examine both natural and manmade environments with accuracy.

The survey and map account holds funds DNR may use for the state base mapping system and land boundary maps.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: With respect to the geological survey, DNR must apply the best practicable technology, including lidar, to identify and map geological hazards and to estimate potential hazard consequences and occurrence probabilities. DNR must coordinate with state and local government agencies to compile existing data, including hazard maps and geotechnical reports, and use the best practicable technology to acquire and process new data or update deficient data. DNR must create and maintain a publicly available database of the maps and data it collects.

Activities DNR performs for the state geological survey are added as an allowable purpose for funds in the surveys and maps account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The SR 530 landslide highlighted the need for a publicly available centralized database of high-quality, statewide geological maps. Washington is subject to significant risks of natural disaster damage. Accessible data from geotechnical reports is critical to the state geological survey's success.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Pearson, prime sponsor; Dave Norman, DNR; Kenneth Neal, Assn. of Environmental & Engineering Geologists.