
HOUSE BILL 1453

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Representatives Pike, Wylie, Takko, and Vick

Read first time 01/21/15. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to eliminating the backlog of land use
2 applications in the Columbia River Gorge commission for the purpose
3 of protecting and enhancing the natural scenery and regional economic
4 development of the Columbia River Gorge national scenic area;
5 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that congress
8 established the Columbia River Gorge commission to protect and
9 enhance both the natural scenery and the regional economic
10 development of the Columbia River Gorge national scenic area in
11 Washington and Oregon. The mission of the Columbia River Gorge
12 commission is to establish policies that enhance the scenic,
13 recreational, and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge, and
14 to support the economy of the area by encouraging growth in existing
15 urban areas and allowing economic development consistent with
16 resource protection.

17 (2) Consistent with this mission, the legislature finds that the
18 Columbia River Gorge national scenic area is experiencing significant
19 economic growth in a number of areas. One example of this economic
20 activity relates to the unmanned aerial vehicle industry that has
21 created numerous jobs and partnerships and has the ability to attract

1 many related industries in the future. The development of these
2 unmanned aerial vehicles is designed for a wide variety of beneficial
3 uses with the utmost respect for privacy concerns.

4 (3) The legislature further finds that although economic growth
5 has occurred in the Columbia River Gorge national scenic area, the
6 Columbia River Gorge commission has experienced budget reductions in
7 recent years and has a backlog of unprocessed land use applications.

8 (4) The legislature intends to provide the Columbia River Gorge
9 commission with two full-time equivalent employees during the
10 2015-2017 biennium for the purpose of eliminating the backlog,
11 improving the land use application process, and enabling the Columbia
12 River Gorge commission to manage new projects that strengthen the
13 economy within the Columbia River Gorge region.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Columbia River Gorge commission
15 shall eliminate the backlog of complete and unprocessed land use
16 applications by July 1, 2017. In complying with this subsection, the
17 Columbia River Gorge commission must:

18 (a) Plan and implement improvements to the land use application
19 review process that will reduce the amount of time needed to process
20 applications;

21 (b) Reinstate processing timelines for land use applications;

22 (c) Provide technical assistance to the land use application
23 programs of Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania counties; and

24 (d) Review proposed amendments to the scenic area management
25 plan.

26 (2) In accordance with RCW 43.01.036, the Columbia River Gorge
27 commission must submit two reports each year to the appropriate
28 committees of the legislature describing progress on the following:

29 (a) The number of new staff members hired and trained by the
30 Columbia River Gorge commission to process applications;

31 (b) The number of applications processed, the date each
32 application was submitted to the Columbia River Gorge commission, the
33 type of land use requested by each application, the date each
34 application was processed by the Columbia River Gorge commission, and
35 the number of applications that remain unprocessed; and

36 (c) Land use application process improvements intended to prevent
37 future backlogs of unprocessed applications.

38 (3) The reports required by this section are due every six
39 months, beginning January 1, 2016, and ending July 1, 2017.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act expires July 1, 2018.

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