

WAC 173-27-215 Shoreline restoration projects—Relief from shoreline master program development standards and use regulations.

(1) Purpose of section. In adopting RCW 90.58.580, the legislature found that restoration of degraded shoreline conditions is important to the ecological function of our waters. However, restoration projects that shift the location of the shoreline can inadvertently create hardships for property owners, particularly in urban areas. Hardship may occur when a shoreline restoration project shifts Shoreline Management Act regulations into areas that had not previously been regulated under the act or shifts the location of required shoreline buffers. The intent of this section is to provide relief to property owners in such cases, while protecting the viability of shoreline restoration projects.

(2) Conditions and criteria for providing relief. The local government may grant relief from shoreline master program development standards and use regulations within urban growth areas when the following apply:

(a) A shoreline restoration project causes or would cause a landward shift in the ordinary high water mark, resulting in the following:

(i) Land that had not been regulated under this chapter prior to construction of the restoration project is brought under shoreline jurisdiction; or

(ii) Additional regulatory requirements apply due to a landward shift in required shoreline buffers or other regulations of the applicable shoreline master program; and

(iii) Application of shoreline master program regulations would preclude or interfere with use of the property permitted by local development regulations, thus presenting a hardship to the project proponent;

(b) The proposed relief meets the following criteria:

(i) The proposed relief is the minimum necessary to relieve the hardship;

(ii) After granting the proposed relief, there is net environmental benefit from the restoration project;

(iii) Granting the proposed relief is consistent with the objectives of the shoreline restoration project and consistent with the shoreline master program; and

(iv) Where a shoreline restoration project is created as mitigation to obtain a development permit, the project proponent required to perform the mitigation is not eligible for relief under this section; and

(c) The application for relief must be submitted to the department for written approval or disapproval. This review must occur during the department's normal review of a shoreline substantial development permit, conditional use permit, or variance. If no such permit is required, then the department shall conduct its review when the local government provides a copy of a complete application and all supporting information necessary to conduct the review.

(i) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (3) of this section, the department shall provide at least twenty days notice to parties that have indicated interest to the department in reviewing applications for relief under this section, and post the notice on its website.

(ii) The department shall act within thirty calendar days of the close of the public notice period, or within thirty days of receipt of

the proposal from the local government if additional public notice is not required.

(3) The public notice requirements of subsection (2)(c) of this section do not apply if the relevant shoreline restoration project was included in a shoreline master program or shoreline restoration plan as defined in WAC 173-26-201, as follows:

(a) The restoration plan has been approved by the department under applicable shoreline master program guidelines;

(b) The shoreline restoration project is specifically identified in the shoreline master program or restoration plan or is located along a shoreline reach identified in the shoreline master program or restoration plan as appropriate for granting relief from shoreline regulations; and

(c) The shoreline master program or restoration plan includes policies addressing the nature of the relief and why, when, and how it would be applied.

(4) A substantial development permit is not required on land within urban growth areas as defined in RCW 36.70A.030 that is brought under shoreline jurisdiction due to a shoreline restoration project creating a landward shift in the ordinary high water mark.

(5) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(6) "Shoreline restoration project" means a project designed to restore impaired ecological function of a shoreline.

[Statutory Authority: Chapter 90.58 RCW. WSR 17-17-016 (Order 15-06), § 173-27-215, filed 8/7/17, effective 9/7/17.]