

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1442

As Passed House
March 16, 1993

Title: An act relating to integrated and coordinated water resource management.

Brief Description: Creating a watershed management task force.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Representatives R. Johnson, Roland and J. Kohl).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks, February 23, 1993, DPS;
Appropriations, March 6, 1993, DPS(NRP);
Passed House, March 16, 1993, 96-1.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Pruitt, Chair; R. Johnson, Vice Chair; Dunshee; Linville; Sheldon; Valle; and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Stevens, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Schoesler; and Thomas.

Staff: Russ Lehman (786-7449) and Linda Byers (786-7129).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Natural Resources & Parks be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Locke, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Appelwick; Basich; Dellwo; Dorn; Dunshee; G. Fisher; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Linville; Peery; Rust; Sommers; Wang; Wineberry; and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes; Cooke; Sehlin; Sheahan; Stevens; and Talcott.

Staff: Nancy Stevenson (786-7137).

Background: A number of entities are involved in the management of water resources, including a number of state agencies, tribes, city and county governments, and an array of special districts. Legislative entities have also been heavily involved in water resource policy. Most recently, the Joint Select Committee on Flood Damage Reduction concluded its legislatively mandated work with a number of findings and recommendations. Among these were findings that (1) flood and stormwater issues are interconnected with other water resource issues, and (2) that planning, permitting, and funding for water resources are not well coordinated.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature finds that there is a need to comprehensively review the policies and institutional framework governing the management, protection, and enhancement of water resources in the state. The Washington Water Resources Policy Commission is created. Membership on the commission is established to include the governor, members of the Legislature, members to represent specific interests, and members of federally recognized Indian tribes. The commission is directed to conduct a comprehensive review of water resource management, including completion of six specific tasks. These tasks must be completed by no later than November 1994. The commission is scheduled to expire in December 1996. The bill does contain an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: (Natural Resources & Parks): Currently there are 12 independently operated state programs dealing with water governance. Decision making is fractured, and timeliness of decisions is a problem. There are a number of watershed projects underway; a watershed approach to governance is a good idea. There are problems now between and sometimes within agencies running different programs in an area or basin. The idea of coordinated water resource management is a good one.

(Appropriations): None.

Testimony Against: (Natural Resources & Parks): The goal of the task force should be more defined, as should its focus. There is more than one definition of "watershed." The study could be expanded. Ecology may not be the appropriate agency to create and manage the task force. Representation

on the task force should be more balanced. The relationship between the task force, the Joint Select Committee on Water Resource Policy, and the Chelan Forum is unclear. The task force should be given specific questions to answer.

(Appropriations): None.

Witnesses: (Natural Resources & Parks): Representative Rob Johnson, prime sponsor; Terry Husseman, Department of Ecology (in favor); Kathleen Collins, Association of Washington Cities (in favor, with comments); Mike Yeager, Washington Forest Protection Association (in favor, with concerns); Sandie Nelson, Northwest Rivers Council (in favor of concept); Dayle Ann Stratton, Black Hills Audubon (in favor of concept); and Tom Mortimer, Washington Water Utility Council (in favor, with questions).

(Appropriations): None.