

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2735

As of February 22, 2002

Title: An act relating to establishing the joint task force on permit streamlining.

Brief Description: Creating a joint task force on permit streamlining.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Romero, Doumit, Linville, Rockefeller, Edwards, Ogden, Dickerson, Jackley, Grant, O'Brien, Upthegrove, Conway and Kenney).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 2/25/02.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: State, federal, and local environmental regulations, several of which have their own permitting requirements, are administered by several different agencies. As a result, environmental permits can be delayed when review processes are done in sequence rather than concurrently. A number of state laws allow or require counties and cities to establish land use regulations or control land use activities. Environmental laws and development regulations regarding land use and development have increased the number of required local and state land use permits. Several state and local agencies have separate review and permit processes, many of which conflict, overlap and duplicate.

The Governor's Competitiveness Council found that Washington's environmental regulatory system "is a tangled structure that evolved in piecemeal fashion, resulting in an uncoordinated and inefficient regulatory regime." The council made several recommendations including consolidating and/or coordinating permitting procedures.

Summary of Bill: The task force on permit streamlining is created and consists of six members of the House of Representatives and six members of the Senate, three each from the majority party and three each from the minority party. The task force is co-chaired by one senator and one state representative appointed by the Senate Majority Leader and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, respectively.

The purpose of the task force is to evaluate the effectiveness of state land use, planning, environmental, and permitting statutes to coordinate and streamline permit review processes and consider needed changes. In doing so, the following objectives are considered:

- Development of a coordinated permit process for all required project permits;
- Improvement in coordination of state and local agencies in reviewing and responding to permit applications;
- Reduction in delays so that permit decisions are made in a timely manner;

- Enhancement of agency responsiveness to concerns regarding processes and decisions;
- Identification of resource problems; and
- Examination of a means to expedite permit processing when more stringent environmental standards are agreed upon.

The task force may appoint an advisory committee of advisors and experts to provide input on various subjects. The staff of Senate Committee Services and the Office of Program Research staff the joint task force.

Final findings, conclusions or recommendations must be agreed to by a majority of the members and included in a final report, along with any legislative proposals, and presented to the Legislature by January 10, 2003. Minority findings, conclusions, or recommendations may also be included.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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