

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3287

As Reported by House Committee On:
Select Committee on Hood Canal

Title: An act relating to studying nitrogen contributions from on-site sewage systems in Hood Canal.

Brief Description: Studying nitrogen contributions from on-site sewage systems in Hood Canal.

Sponsors: Representatives Chase, Sump, Eickmeyer, McCoy, Walsh and Pearson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Select Committee on Hood Canal: 2/2/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the Puget Sound Action Team and the Hood Canal Coordinating Council to contract for a study in Hood Canal to improve data on nitrogen loading from on-site septic systems.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOOD CANAL

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Eickmeyer, Chair; McCoy, Vice Chair; Pearson, Ranking Minority Member; Sump, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Chase and Walsh.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

Hood Canal

Hood Canal is a glacier-carved fjord approximately 60 miles in length with approximately 180 miles of shoreline. Portions of Hood Canal have had low-dissolved oxygen concentrations for many years. Research and monitoring related to Hood Canal's low-dissolved oxygen concentrations is being conducted. The Department of Ecology's marine waters monitoring program and the University of Washington's Puget Sound Regional Synthesis Model (PRISM) program involve testing at numerous Hood Canal stations. In addition, Hood Canal monitoring and research are being conducted by the United States Geological Survey and various local agencies and organizations. Furthermore, a group of 20 federal, state, local, tribal, and nonprofit entities have established the Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program

(HCDOP), a three-year effort to coordinate Hood Canal monitoring, analysis, and modeling results.

Hood Canal Rehabilitation Program

The Puget Sound Action Team (PSAT) is a state agency that develops and coordinates water quality programs for Puget Sound. The Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) is a group of county and tribal governments established to address water quality problems and natural resource issues in the Hood Canal watershed. The Legislature authorized development of the Hood Canal Rehabilitation Program (HCRP) in 2005. The PSAT is designated as the state lead agency for the HCRP. The HCCC is designated as the HCRP's local management board. The PSAT and HCCC must jointly coordinate a process to prioritize projects, studies, and activities based on the likely value in addressing and resolving Hood Canal's low-dissolved oxygen concentrations.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The PSAT and the HCCC must contract for a study in the Hood Canal to improve data on nitrogen loading from on-site septic systems in Hood Canal. The study must compile data on on-site septic systems and collect samples from a variety of sites. The study design must consider samples both up gradient and down gradient from on-site septic systems, and collect data from drain fields to test their efficiency. The study must also improve data and knowledge of nitrogen loading from all groundwater sources to Hood Canal, and must be coordinated with other studies conducted in the canal by the HCDOP. The PSAT and the HCCC must report findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2007.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill clarifies that the study must locate representative on-site sewage systems within Hood Canal, and also clarifies that the study must be coordinated with other efforts in Hood Canal.

Appropriation: The sum of \$600,00 from the General Fund.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (In support of original bill) The Select Committee members have learned a great deal about the water quality problems in Hood Canal, but additional information is needed. The current best available information regarding the nitrogen contributions from on-site sewage systems is based on literature and preliminary studies conducted in Hood Canal. If the state proposes to invest significant resources to restore Hood Canal, the state should insist on accurate science. Good science can assist in prioritizing scarce resources.

Studying the problem can provide better information for citizens and stakeholders and improve public relations with citizens in Hood Canal. This study would improve the work on the model being developed by the HCDOP.

(With concerns on original bill) This item is not found in the Governor's budget.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support of original bill) Representative Chase, prime sponsor; Keith Dublanica, Skokomish Indian Tribe; Fran McNair, Department of Natural Resources; Debbie Riley, Mason County Department of Health; and David Christensen, Hood Canal Coordinating Council.

(With concerns on original bill) Maryanne Guichard, Department of Health.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.