
**Natural Resources, Ecology &
Parks Committee**

HB 1491

Brief Description: Reorganizing aquatic lands statutes.

Sponsors: Representatives B. Sullivan, Kretz, Upthegrove, Orcutt, Eickmeyer and Buck; by request of Commissioner of Public Lands.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Consolidates and updates the statutory language that governs the Department of Natural Resources' management of aquatic lands without making substantive changes.

Hearing Date: 2/1/05

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Legislature created the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in 1957, and assigned to it the responsibility for managing the state's aquatic lands for the benefit of the public (RCW 79.90.450). The DNR manages over two million acres of tidelands, shorelands, and bedlands. This includes the beds of all navigable rivers and lakes, along with the beds below the Puget Sound.

The management of aquatic lands must support a balance of goals, including the encouragement of public access, the fostering of water-dependent uses, the utilization of renewable resources, and the generation of revenue (RCW 79.90.455). Revenues generated from the state's aquatic lands are generally directed to be used for public benefits, such as shoreline access, environmental protection, and recreational opportunities (RCW 79.90.450). Under current law, the DNR may lease aquatic lands (RCW 79.90.460), and exchange state-owned aquatic lands for privately owned lands (RCW 79.90.457). The DNR may also accept gifts of aquatic lands (RCW 79.90.580).

Most of the structure that outlines the DNR's duties and responsibilities is codified in Title 77 of the Revised Code of Washington, which was last rewritten in 1982.

Summary of Bill:

Statutes governing the DNR's management of aquatic lands are reorganized without substantive change. Non-substantive revisions eliminate outdated terms and antiquated provisions, create gender neutrality, and regroup like subjects.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/27/05.

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