

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 3287

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Water, Energy & Environment, February 22, 2006

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: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Chase, Sump, Eickmeyer, McCoy, Walsh and Pearson).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/11/06, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Water, Energy & Environment: 2/21/06, 2/22/06 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Poulsen, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Delvin, Fraser, Honeyford, Mulliken, Pridemore and Regala.

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: Portions of Hood Canal have had low-dissolved oxygen for many years. Research and monitoring regarding this phenomenon is being conducted under programs administered by several federal, state, local, tribal, and nonprofit entities. To coordinate monitoring and analysis, 20 entities have joined in a collaborative effort, called the Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program.

A state agency, the Puget Sound Action Team (PSAT), develops and coordinates Puget Sound water quality programs. The Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC), a group of county and tribal governments, seeks to address water quality problems and natural resource issues in the Hood Canal watershed.

In 2005, the Legislature authorized a Hood Canal Rehabilitation Program, with PSAT as lead state agency and HCCC as the local management board. PSAT and HCCC were directed to jointly prioritize projects, studies, and activities based on likely value in addressing and resolving Hood Canal's low dissolved oxygen concentrations.

Summary of Bill: PSAT and HCCC will contract for a study to improve knowledge of nitrogen-loading from on-site sewage systems (OSS) to ground water and from ground water to Hood Canal. The study will also determine local efficiency of nitrogen removal from OSS.

Specifically, the study will locate representative OSS within the Hood Canal drainage basin; collect water levels and samples from nearby areas under varied conditions; test samples for nitrogen and other substances; consider data from monitoring wells above and below OSS;

collect data from drain fields to test OSS efficiency; and collect data from existing wells to test how much nitrogen is reaching Hood Canal.

PSAT and HCCC will coordinate with other studies being conducted through the Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program and report their findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2007.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 20, 2006.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The study mandated in this bill is necessary to better assess the effect of nitrogen from OSS in Hood Canal. The need for further research became apparent during implementation of the current Hood Canal rehabilitation program co-managed by PSAT and HCCC. It is appropriate to conduct this research before spending additional funds on rehabilitating Puget Sound.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Chase, prime sponsor; Terry Hull, PSAT; Dave Christensen, HCCC; Ezra Eickmeyer, concerned citizen.