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**HOUSE BILL 2300**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Blake, Walsh, Tarleton, Orcutt, Klippert, Doglio, and Young

AN ACT Relating to creating a legislative task force to provide economic relief for communities impacted by environmental protections of the marbled murrelet; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The marbled murrelet, scientific name *Brachyramphus marmoratus*, is a protected species that resides along the west coast of North America with a population in Washington state that is greater than when it was listed under the federal endangered species act in 1992, but is reported to be in decline in recent years. The state has increased its environmental protections for the marbled murrelet and the department of natural resources is in the process of updating the 1997 state trust lands habitat conservation plan. Impacted communities are asking for better governance that will facilitate economic growth in areas subject to additional governmental environmental restrictions. The legislature intends to convene a task force of community and government leaders to review the current situation and make recommendations for improvement.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1)(a) A legislative task force on the impacts of the protection of the marbled murrelet, to be known as the habitat conservation program damage response task force, is established, with members as provided in this subsection.

(b) The task force is comprised of:

(i) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate as appointed by the minority and majority leaders of the senate and one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives as appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(ii) The governor, or a designated employee;

(iii) The commissioner of public lands, or a designated employee;

(iv) A representative of the department of fish and wildlife, as designated by the director;

(v) A representative of the United States fish and wildlife service with knowledge about the marbled murrelet or its regulation, if the department chooses to participate;

(vi) A representative of the department of commerce, as designated by the director;

(vii) One county commissioner from each county of the area impacted, to be selected by each county commission;

(viii) A representative of an association representing farms and forests;

(ix) A representative of an association representing a statewide association to protect forests;

(x) A representative of an organization representing businesses reliant on tourism;

(xi) At least one representative of a port located in each county of the area impacted;

(xii) A representative of entities involved in commercial fisheries in the area impacted;

(xiii) A representative of a chamber of commerce in each county of the area impacted; and

(xiv) A representative of the Indian tribe that resides along the shores of Willapa Bay designated by the tribal council, if the tribe chooses to participate.

(c) For the purposes of this subsection "area impacted" means each of the counties bordering the Pacific Ocean and Columbia river that have areas designated as protected habitat by the United States or Washington state for the marbled murrelet.

(2) The sponsor of this act shall convene the initial meeting of the task force by August 1, 2018, and shall serve as cochair. The senate cochair must be appointed by the majority leader of the senate. The cochairs shall invite individuals to serve as nonlegislative and nonexecutive representatives on the task force.

(3) The task force shall review and take testimony on the following issues:

(a) The economic impacts associated with environmental protection of the marbled murrelets in counties bordering the Pacific Ocean;

(b) The barriers to development in areas subject to marbled murrelets environmental protections;

(c) The property tax burden shift caused by the devaluation of land due to environmental protections of the marbled murrelets;

(d) Identify activities that could improve the economic vitality of the impacted areas; and

(e) Any other issues related to improved prosperity and government regulations connected to marbled murrelets.

(4) The task force shall identify potential state actions to improve the economic vitality in counties impacted by the presence of marbled murrelets and recommend any changes to state policy, government rules, or statutes in a report to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2018. The report should identify which recommendations are supported by a majority of voting members of the task force. Nonvoting members include representatives designated in subsection (1)(b)(ii) through (vi) of this section.

(5) The task force may provide information and economic evaluations to the federal government as part of the process of the update to the 1997 state trust lands habitat conservation plan.

(6) Staff support for the task force must be provided by senate committee services, house of representative office of program research, and state agency members of the task force. The task force may consult with additional persons who have specific technical expertise if such expertise is necessary to carry out the duties of the task force.

(7) Legislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members, except those representing an employer or organization, are entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(8) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the senate and the house of representatives.

(9) This section expires July 1, 2019.

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