

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1121

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the frequency of Puget Sound action agenda implementation strategy and science work plan updates.

Brief Description: Concerning the frequency of Puget Sound action agenda implementation strategy and science work plan updates.

Sponsors: House Committee on Environment (originally sponsored by Representatives Muri, Fitzgibbon, Short, Peterson, Fey, Smith, Kagi, Barkis, McBride, Farrell, Wilcox, Jinkins, Haler, Stanford, Gregerson, Kilduff, Tarleton, Tharinger and Pollet; by request of Puget Sound Partnership).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Environment: 1/19/17, 2/2/17 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/13/17, 75-22.

Passed Senate: 4/6/17, 47-2.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Changes the frequency for the Puget Sound Partnership to update its action agenda and its science work plan from every two years to every four years.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Fitzgibbon, Chair; Peterson, Vice Chair; Shea, Ranking Minority Member; Fey, Kagi and McBride.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Taylor, Ranking Minority Member; Dye.

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

The Puget Sound Partnership.

The Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership) was created as a state agency in 2007. The Partnership's mission is to oversee the restoration of the environmental health of Puget Sound. The Partnership consists of a leadership council, an executive director, an ecosystem coordination board, and a Puget Sound science panel. As part of its work, the Partnership produces three broad documents: an action agenda, a science work plan, and a State of the Sound Report (Report). The Partnership also provides a set of funding recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature every two years.

The Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda.

The Partnership produces an action agenda, which must be updated every two years. Among other elements, the action agenda addresses all geographic areas of Puget Sound, describes problems affecting Puget Sound's health, identifies implementation strategies to restore and protect Puget Sound, and incorporates appropriate actions to carry out the science work plan. Biennial updates to the action agenda include revised implementation strategies, benchmarks for near-term actions, and prioritized actions.

The Puget Sound Partnership Science Work Plan.

The Partnership also produces a science work plan, which must be updated every two years. The science work plan identifies recommendations from scientific and technical reports regarding Puget Sound, describes whether ongoing work addresses the recommendations, describes Puget Sound science-related activities being conducted by various entities in the region, identifies specific science work actions to be done over the course of the work plan, and recommends improvements to the ongoing science work in Puget Sound.

The Puget Sound Partnership State of the Sound Report.

The Partnership also produces the Report every two years. The Report includes, among other elements, an assessment of the progress made in implementing the action agenda, findings from the assessment and monitoring program, a review of citizen concerns provided to the Partnership, and a review of the expenditure of state funds.

The Puget Sound Partnership Funding Recommendations.

In each even-numbered year, the Partnership is required to provide to the Governor and the Legislature its recommendations for the funding necessary to implement the action agenda for the upcoming biennium. Among other things, the funding recommendations identify funding needed for the action agenda and funding needed to support the work of the Partnership, and address funding responsibilities among local, state, and federal governments, as well as nongovernmental funding.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Puget Sound Partnership's (Partnership) action agenda must be updated every four years, rather than every two years. Updates to the action agenda will include revised implementation strategies, quadrennial benchmarks for near-term actions, and prioritized actions necessary in the four-year period to achieve the objectives of the action agenda.

The Partnership's science work plan must be updated every four years, rather than every two years.

The State of the Sound Report that the Partnership provides to the Legislature every two year will include references to ongoing science-related activities and monitoring efforts.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Changing the frequency of the science work plan from every two years to every four years will benefit the Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership), government efficiency, the Partnership's partners, and Puget Sound itself. The original thinking for the two-year cycle had been that recovery actions would take only two years, and so updates would therefore need to be updated every two years. After 10 years of experience, the short time cycle has not been helpful. A recent Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) audit suggested modifying the Partnership's timeline for reporting. Reviewing and updating the science work plan takes tremendous effort and cost. The bill would not change the frequency of the State of the Sound Report, which will continue to be published on a two-year cycle. The bill creates efficiency for those who contribute to the preparation of the Partnership reports. The bill would free up personnel to focus more time on implementation of the work of the Puget Sound Partnership.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Muri, prime sponsor; Sheida Sahandy, Puget Sound Partnership; and David Price, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.