

**RCW 90.84.005 Findings—Purpose—Intent.** (1) The legislature finds that wetlands mitigation banks are an important tool for providing compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands. The legislature further finds that the benefits of mitigation banks include: (a) Maintenance of the ecological functioning of a watershed by consolidating compensatory mitigation into a single large parcel rather than smaller individual parcels; (b) increased potential for the establishment and long-term management of successful mitigation by bringing together financial resources, planning, and scientific expertise not practicable for many project-specific mitigation proposals; (c) increased certainty over the success of mitigation and reduction of temporal losses of wetlands since mitigation banks are typically implemented and functioning in advance of project impacts; (d) potential enhanced protection and preservation of the state's highest value and highest functioning wetlands; (e) a reduction in permit processing times and increased opportunity for more cost-effective compensatory mitigation for development projects; and (f) the ability to provide compensatory mitigation in an efficient, predictable, and economically and environmentally responsible manner. Therefore, the legislature declares that it is the policy of the state to authorize wetland mitigation banking.

(2) The purpose of this chapter is to support the establishment of mitigation banks by: (a) Authorizing state agencies and local governments, as well as private entities, to achieve the goals of this chapter; and (b) providing a predictable, efficient, regulatory framework, including timely review of mitigation bank proposals. The legislature intends that, in the development and adoption of rules for banks, the department establish and use a collaborative process involving interested public and private entities. [1998 c 248 § 1.]