

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1315

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Trade & Economic Development*

Title: An act relating to a fish and wildlife work force.

Brief Description: Creating a training program for displaced timber workers in Skagit county.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Haugen, Spanel, Wilson, R. Johnson, Kremen, Braddock, H. Sommers, Morris, R. King, Sheldon, Hargrove, Belcher, Basich, Dorn, Jacobsen and Wineberry.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Trade & Economic Development, February 26, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1315 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 10 members: Representatives Cantwell, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Forner, Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ferguson; Ludwig; Moyer; Rasmussen; Riley; and Roland.

Staff: Bill Watterson (786-7349).

Background: Timber harvest levels, particularly on federal lands, are expected to decrease significantly. This will adversely impact the State generally and timber communities specifically.

The estimated job losses resulting from the reduced harvest level vary significantly. The Governor's Office estimates the direct and indirect job losses at 20,000; the House Timber Task Force estimated the job losses at 26,000.

Training and retraining programs, most of which are administered by the state Department of Employment Security and funded through the federal Job Training Partnership Act, can benefit timber-dependent communities. An example of this is job dislocation assistance.

Skagit County is one of seven counties that the Governor's Office has listed as being most dependent on timber for their economic livelihood.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A five year pilot project is established to provide education and training for dislocated timber workers and their spouses. The project is coordinated jointly by the state Employment Security Department and Skagit Valley Community College. The project is contingent upon the acquisition of funds by the department and college.

The education and training program will be developed by Skagit Valley Community College in consultation with the state departments of Ecology, Fisheries, Natural Resources, Wildlife, the state Parks and Recreation Commission, and other Skagit County employers to determine minimum employment qualifications in the areas of natural resource management and enhancement of the Skagit River.

The Employment Security Department is to contract with the Economic Development Association of Skagit County to coordinate with the college and the state departments of Ecology, Fisheries, Natural Resources, Wildlife, the state Parks and Recreation Commission, and other Skagit County employers to assist dislocated timber workers and their spouses in securing education and employment in the natural resource professions.

The Employment Security Department and the Skagit Valley Community College shall provide an annual report to the state Legislature.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute does not require that the pilot project be established unless funds are acquired.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 30, 1991.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: This bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 15, 1991.

Testimony For: The bill redresses the lack of training and employment opportunities for dislocated timber workers in Skagit and northern Snohomish counties.

Testimony Against: Training should be for employment in jobs which guarantee adequate wages to support a family, rather than entry level jobs.

Witnesses: Ted W. Anderson, Forest Families Action Committee Taskforce (in favor of bill); Theresa Deschene,

Washington Workers Resource Committee (supports bill, but opposed to entry level nature of job preparation); Karlene Collins, Washington Workers Resource Committee (supports bill, but favors training for family wage jobs and more community involvement); Robin Sherman, Economic Development Association of Skagit County (in favor of bill); Bert Williamson, Skagit Valley College (in favor of bill); Don Wick, Economic Development Association of Skagit County (in favor of bill); Jim Pissot, National Audubon Society (in favor of bill); Roger Reidel, Washington State Labor Council (supports bill's intent, but against bill without provisions for establishing family wage jobs); Susan Markey, Washington Department of Fisheries (in favor of bill); Pam Madson, Washington Department of Wildlife (in favor of bill); Tim Strege, Job Training Executives of Washington (in favor of bill); Larry Malo, Employment Security Department (supports bill, but concerned that: federal funding cannot be guaranteed for 5 years; spouses will not be eligible for federal funding of education and training; and restrictions on federal funds do not allow contracting with Economic Development Association of Skagit County); Pat Green, State Board for Community College Education (supports bill, but concerned that federal funds cover only 23 percent of instruction costs and that the enrollment lid at Skagit Valley College will force displacement of others in order to make room for dislocated timber workers and their spouses).