

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 1022-S

May 19, 1997

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, Substitute House Bill No. 1022 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to the department of natural resources;"

Substitute House Bill No. 1022 would require that long-range commitments made by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding the management of state trust lands, specifically, the habitat conservation plan (HCP), and the implementation agreement made with the federal government pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act, be subject to legislative review. The legislature would determine "whether the plan and the accompanying implementation agreement are in compliance with the state's fiduciary responsibilities and are, in fact, in the best interests of the trust beneficiaries." The HCP would automatically be terminated unless the legislature took affirmative action to approve it by March 15, 1998.

In 1957, the legislature created the Board of Natural Resources to provide broad direction to DNR over the management of state trust lands. There was solid wisdom in this approach taken by the legislature. The Board of Natural Resources reviewed the benefits and risks to the HCP and concluded, after three years of thorough examination and public review, that the HCP was in the long-term best interest of the trust beneficiaries. As such, the Board has well met its fundamental responsibilities as a trust manager, providing long-term stability and revenue for beneficiaries now and for generations to come. It is not appropriate for the legislature to now usurp DNR's authority.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Substitute House Bill No. 1022 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor