

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1246

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Energy & Water, March 21, 2003

Title: An act relating to authorization to accept gifts of aquatic land.

Brief Description: Authorizing the department of natural resources to accept gifts of aquatic land.

Sponsors: Representatives Linville, Schoesler, Rockefeller, Sump, Orcutt, Quall, Upthegrove and Mielke; by request of Commissioner of Public Lands.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Energy & Water: 3/21/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & WATER

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Morton, Chair; Hewitt, Vice Chair; Doumit, Fraser, Hargrove and Regala.

Staff: Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

Background: Like all other states, Washington, at the time of statehood, became the owner of the beds and shores of navigable waters within its boundaries, known as state-owned aquatic lands. Most of these lands were transferred to private ownership, until 1971, when the Legislature restricted any further transfers and delegated management of remaining state-owned aquatic lands to the Department of Natural Resources. The department is directed to manage these lands to support a balance of goals, including public access, water-dependent uses, renewable resource utilization, and revenue generation.

From time to time, private owners desire to gift aquatic lands back to the state. The department, however, lacks express statutory authority to accept lands for purposes of management as state-owned aquatic lands, rather than for purposes of the common school trust.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Natural Resources is authorized to accept gifts of aquatic lands within the state to become part of the base of state-owned aquatic lands. This authorization is retroactive. Consistent with aquatic lands management guidelines, the department must adopt procedures and criteria for accepting the gifts, including obtaining an appraisal, conducting an environmental site assessment, obtaining a title report approved by the Attorney General, and submitting these to the Board of Natural Resources prior to acceptance.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill speaks for itself and it is appropriate and necessary.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Loren Stern, DNR (pro).