

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSCR 8418

As Passed Senate, February 4, 2004

Brief Description: Creating a joint select legislative task force to evaluate permitting processes.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water (originally sponsored by Senators Berkey, Swecker, Doumit, Schmidt, Mulliken, Parlette, Keiser, Rasmussen, Haugen and Murray).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Energy & Water: 1/29/04, 1/30/04 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/4/04, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & WATER

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 8418 be substituted therefor, and the substitute concurrent resolution do pass.

Signed by Senators Morton, Chair; Doumit, Fraser, Hale, Hargrove, Honeyford and Regala.

Staff: Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

Background: A legislative work group on permit processes has recommended the convening of a joint effort by the four legislative caucuses and the Governor, a "five corners task force," to improve state and local permitting processes.

Summary of Bill: A joint select legislative task force is established to evaluate and make recommendations regarding permitting processes and report to the Legislature by January 1, 2005. The task force is composed of the chairs and the ranking minority members of the Senate Committee on Land Use and Planning and the House Local Government Committee. It will invite the Governor to join it and form a "Five Corners Task Force." An advisory committee is established, composed of representatives of state agencies, counties, cities, the business community, the environmental community, agriculture, labor, and federally recognized Indian tribes. Staff support is provided by Senate Committee Services and the Office of Program Research.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: Permitting in Washington needs to be both streamlined and made more effective; it's the most time-consuming and costly in the country. Engineers, architects, and others who generally represent permit applicants should be added to the advisory committee, because of their experience. Ports should also be included.

Testimony Against: There is no need to add to the long list of existing permit streamlining efforts. The effectiveness of permits needs to be emphasized, not just streamlining.

Testified: Senator Berkey, prime sponsor (pro); Kristen Sawin, AWB (pro w/amend.); Ivy Sager Rosentahl, WashPIRG (con); Jerry Smedes, NW Environmental Business Council (concerns); Duke Schaub, Assoc. Gen. Contractors (pro).

House Amendment(s): The scope is limited to local development regulations and to jurisdictions selected by the Task Force from among the "buildable lands" counties and their cities over 50,000. The role of the advisory committee is limited to responding to specific requests by the Task Force. The Commissioner of Public Lands, Secretary of Transportation, and Director of Fish and Wildlife are no longer included on the advisory committee, and the Director of the Office of Regulatory Assistance, the property rights community, the construction industry, and ports are added. Environmental representatives are increased to two and include the 1000 Friends of Washington and the Washington Environmental Council. The report is moved forward to January 1, 2006.