

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6402

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 2, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to the Columbia river safety and coastal crab mitigation work group.

**Brief Description:** Creating the Columbia river safety and coastal crab mitigation work group.

**Sponsors:** Senators Doumit, Oke, Jacobsen, Regala, Spanel and Shin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/23/06, 2/2/06 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6402 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Oke, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Morton, Spanel and Stevens.

**Staff:** Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

**Background:** The Columbia River Channel Improvement Project is an ongoing effort to deepen the lower Columbia River navigation channel from 40 feet to 43 feet in depth, from the Pacific Ocean to Portland, Oregon, in order to facilitate shipping on the Columbia River. The project contemplates the dredging of the navigation channel, disposal of dredged material, and annual maintenance once the initial deepening has occurred.

In 2002, the Department of Ecology provided its conditional concurrence, under the federal Clean Water and Coastal Zone Management Acts, to the United State's Army Corps of Engineers' proposal for the project.

In December 2005, the first phase of the project, involving approximately 28 miles of the Columbia River, was completed. Thus, approximately one quarter of miles to be deepened under the project have been dredged.

Throughout the planning process for, and execution of, the project, concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the disposal of dredged materials to navigation safety and the state's coastal crab resource.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Columbia river safety and coastal crab mitigation work group is established and includes members from the Coastal Communities of Southwest Washington, coastal crab fisher associations, port districts below the Bonneville dam, and the Columbia River Channel Coalition.

The work group must evaluate the safety risks from wave amplification and the impacts to the coastal crab resource of the state from the Columbia River Channel Improvement Project,

including annual maintenance and disposal activity. Additionally, the work group must adopt recommendations for measures that would help to avoid, minimize, or compensate for such risks and impacts.

The work group shall attempt to work with the United States Army Corps of Engineers as it carries out its duties. The work group shall also attempt to work with the Corps and the Washington State congressional delegation in order to address the impacts from the Columbia River Channel Improvement Project and implement the work group's recommendations.

The work group and its powers and duties terminate June 30, 2007.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The work group is moved outside of the Department of Ecology and state agencies are removed from representation on the work group. Representatives of the Columbia River Channel Coalition are added to the work group.

The work group is given more general responsibility to investigate impacts and make recommendations regarding the Columbia River Channel Improvement Project, whereas the original bill set forth specific instructions to the work group to examine the Corps' responsibilities and to seek to enter into a mitigation and safety agreement with the Corps.

The work group is instructed to attempt to work with the Washington State congressional delegation and the Corps to address the issues stemming from the Columbia River Channel Improvement Project.

The work group and its powers and duties are set to terminate June 30, 2007.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** Yes.

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

**Testimony For:** Dredging on the Columbia has raised serious concerns about impacts to the important crab resources of the area and concerns for the safety of crab fishers due to increased wave size. State agencies, municipalities, and crab fishers have tried to work with the Corps of Engineers to address these concerns, but have met with resistance. Although it is important for the Corps of Engineers to conduct projects economically, the fact that the disposal of dredged materials is putting people in danger should be taken into consideration.

**Testimony Other:** The issues stemming from the Columbia dredging project center on sediment management and the existing Ocean Policy Work Group would be an appropriate forum for such a discussion. Although these issues need to be addressed, the most effective avenue would be working through the Washington State congressional delegation.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Dale Beasley, CRCFA; Ray Toste, WDCFA; Phil Anderson, DFW; Chuck Gale, Pacific International Engineering.

OTHER: Tom Clingman, DOE; Rick Wickman, CRCC.