

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## 2SSB 6227

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Agriculture & Natural Resources

**Title:** An act relating to strengthening Washington's outer coast marine resources committees.

**Brief Description:** Providing support and resources to outer coast marine resources committees.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator Jacobsen).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/25/08, 2/27/08 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill**

- Creates the Outer Coast Marine Resources Committee Program to provide support, administration, and coordination of outer coast marine resources committees and their projects.
- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to provide each outer coast marine resources committee with a coordinator and distribute grants for projects that benefit Washington's coastal marine resources.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Van De Wege, Vice Chair; Kretz, Ranking Minority Member; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Eickmeyer, Grant, Kristiansen, Lantz, Loomis, McCoy, Nelson, Newhouse and Orcutt.

**Staff:** Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

**Background:**

Congress created the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (Conservation Initiative) in 1998 as a conservation and restoration program serving the northwest portion of Puget Sound. The Conservation Initiative is charged with establishing community-based

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marine stewardship, conducting citizen-driven scientific studies on marine species and their habitat, and restoring marine habitat.

The Conservation Initiative has established seven Marine Resource Committees (MRCs), one for each of the following counties: Clallam, Island, Jefferson, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom. Each of these MRCs are citizen-based, with representatives from local government, tribal government, and the scientific, economic, recreational, and conservation communities.

In 2007 the Legislature authorized all outer coast counties to establish MRCs for their coastal areas, along with certain Puget Sound counties. The statutory purpose of MRCs is to address, utilizing sound science, the needs of the marine ecosystem local to the county initiating the MRC. County legislative authorities may create MRCs. In addition, citizens may also petition the county to create an MRC.

State MRC membership must reflect balanced representation from local governments, scientific experts, economic interests, recreational interests, environmental interests, and tribal representation. Generally, county legislative authorities determine MRC membership.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is the coordinating entity for outer coast MRCs.

Salmon recovery lead entities are local, watershed-based organizations that prioritize and submit to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board habitat protection and restoration projects for funding consideration.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The Outer Coast Marine Resources Committee Program (Program) is created to support outer coast MRCs. As director of the Program, the WDFW must: (1) provide each outer coast MRC with a coordinator to support the committee's work; and (2) distribute grants to outer coast MRCs to support projects that benefit coastal marine resources.

The MRCs must annually report their activities and recommendations to the Governor and Legislature. Additionally, the WDFW must develop grant procedures and processes, which may include annual funding allocations for each MRC.

An MRC membership must include representation from local residents. In lieu of creating a new entity to serve as an outer coast or Puget Sound MRC, a county legislative authority may designate a salmon recovery lead entity organization to also serve as the MRC. However, a county may only make this designation upon consent of the lead entity organization.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This legislation is very important. All interests have been involved in the crafting of this legislation. Locals need to be involved and this bill would provide positive engagement and stewardship. This bill will help coordinate local community projects with other state projects. Having staff and a coordinator is essential for success, and this bill would provide that. The MRCs are great public awareness programs.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Dale Beasley, Columbia River Crab Fisherman's Association; Ray Toste, Washington Dungeness Crab Fisherman's Association; Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries; Jody Kennedy, Surfrider Foundation; and Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.