

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6308

As Reported by House Committee On:

Ecology & Parks
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to climate change research, preparation, and adaptation.

Brief Description: Preparing for and adapting to climate change.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Water, Energy & Telecommunications (originally sponsored by Senators Rockefeller, Regala, Murray, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Pridemore, Oemig, Kilmer, Jacobsen, Kline, Shin and McAuliffe).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Ecology & Parks: 2/27/08, 2/28/08 [DPA];
Appropriations: 3/1/08 [DPA(APP w/o EPAR)].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- Requires the Department of Ecology to report to the Governor and to the Legislature with recommendations for creating a comprehensive climate change research, preparation, and adaptation program.
- Creates the Office of Washington State Climatologist within the University of Washington.
- Requires the state climatologist to supply critical information for drought preparedness and extreme weather conditions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Upthegrove, Chair; Rolfes, Vice Chair; Dickerson, Dunshee and O'Brien.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Kristiansen and Pearson.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

Background:

On February 7, 2007, the Governor issued Executive Order 07-02 establishing goals for greenhouse gas emissions reductions, increasing clean energy sector jobs, and reducing expenditures on imported fuel. The executive order also directed the Department of Ecology (DOE) and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) to lead stakeholders in a process that considers a full range of policies and strategies to achieve the emissions goals.

In response to the Governor's executive order, the DOE and the DCTED have formed the Washington Climate Advisory Team (CAT) to assist with the development of specific action-oriented recommendations for climate change mitigation policies and plans for Washington. Their report is due to the Governor in 2008. The final report will compile and summarize recommended policy options of the CAT based on the outcome of final votes on individual recommendations.

Preparation and Adaptation Working Groups (PAWGs) have been formed as a part of the CAT to assist the DOE and the DCTED in developing recommendations for the Governor on how Washington can prepare and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Departments of Agriculture, Health, Natural Resources, and the DOE will lead PAWGs that will examine climate change impacts, and identify preparation and adaptation strategies and additional research needs. The PAWGs are structured around five sectors:

- Agriculture: species changes, crop changes, and pests;
- Forestry Resources: growth rate, pests, fires;
- Human Health: air quality, heat stroke, pests/vectors, and zoonotic disease;
- Water Resources and Quality: freshwater, in-stream flows, municipal water, industrial water, flooding/droughts, storm water, salmon recovery, stream temps, hydropower, and water supply; and
- Coastal and Infrastructure: infrastructure design and location, erosion, coastal flooding, habitat, and other issues identified by the group as important for consideration.

Summary of Amended Bill:

By November 1, 2008, the DOE must report to the Governor and to the Legislature with recommendations for creating a comprehensive climate change research, preparation, and adaptation program. The DOE must develop its report based on the work of the PAWGs established by Executive Order 07-02.

The report must include at least the following:

- criteria to establish state-funded research priorities;
- methods to ensure data and information systems will be most effective for and accessible to relevant planning jurisdictions and the public generally;
- funding that may be needed by local, regional, state, and other planning jurisdictions; and

- any specific projects or pilot projects identified to ensure the state is adequately prepared for the impacts of climate change.

When developing the report, the DOE must consider private, public, and tribal interests who may be impacted by the recommendations of the report or specific impacts of climate change being considered by the workgroups. These groups must be invited to participate in developing the report.

The Office of Washington State Climatologist is created within the University of Washington. The State Climatologist represents the state in all climatological and meteorological matters when requested by the legislative or executive branches of state government and serves as a credible and expert source of climate and weather information for state and local decision makers and agencies. The State Climatologist is appointed by the president of the University of Washington.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:

The amended bill clarifies that "natural changes" include the estimated annual amounts of greenhouse gases emitted during in-state volcanic and forest fire events. It also codifies the act in Title 70.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) None.

(Neutral) The PAWGs are currently working on the issues that this legislation identifies, and are working on providing recommendations for adapting to the expected impacts of climate change in Washington.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (Neutral) Tom Laurie, Department of Ecology.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Appropriations and without amendment by Committee on Ecology & Parks. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Dunshee, Vice Chair; Anderson, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Ericks,

Fromhold, Green, Haigh, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Morrell, Pettigrew, Priest, Schual-Berke, Seaquist and Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Grant, Hinkle, Kretz, Ross, Schmick and Walsh.

Staff: Alicia Dunkin (786-7178).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Ecology & Parks:

The state climatologist is required to supply critical information for extreme weather conditions, in addition to information on drought preparedness, and to serve as a member of the state's committees as formed in response to an extreme weather event or a drought event. A null and void clause was added, making the bill null and void unless funded in the budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

None.

Persons Testifying: None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.