

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2471

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 27, 2008

Title: An act relating to the Washington geological survey.

Brief Description: Modifying the responsibilities of the Washington geological survey.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Dickerson, VanDeWege, McCoy and Kenney; by request of Department of Natural Resources).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/14/08, 94-0.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/21/08, 2/27/08 [DPA-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Hatfield, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Rockefeller and Stevens.

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: Current law sets forth the duties relating to the state geological survey (survey), which was created in 1890. The Commissioner of Public Lands appoints a Supervisor of Geology, also known as the State Geologist, to supervise the survey.

The objectives of the survey include the following:

- an examination of the economic products of the state, including precious metals and building materials;
- an examination and classification of the state's soils and their adaptability to certain crops;
- an investigation into the water supplies of the state;
- an examination of the occurrence of different road building material;
- the preparation of special maps to illustrate the resources of the state; and
- the consideration of other questions of value to the state.

In addition, authority is provided for the printing of survey publications, for cooperation with the United States Geological Survey, and for agency access to private lands for survey purposes.

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.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendment): The geological survey is required to serve as a bureau of information and an advisory service for geologic resources and hazards. This includes:

- maintaining a library, a public education program, and geologic database;
- reviewing functions;
- providing expert advice to federal, state, and local government agencies;
- operating a clearinghouse of posthazard event earth science investigations; and
- providing technical assistance to local governments on geological hazards, mineral resources, and aggregate mining and reclamation during preparation and amendment of comprehensive plans and land use regulations.

The survey must collect geotechnical and related reports prepared by applicants in support of building construction and land-use permits from local governments or state government. The survey must use these reports in the development of a statewide electronic database of subsurface geotechnical data.

The survey is responsible for preserving the information collected, developed, or obtained under this act in a public accessible electronic data system. In addition, the survey must establish and maintain a storage and examination facility for physical samples. Also, the survey must promote outdoor recreation and education through the creation and dissemination of interpretive materials.

The bill contains a null and void clause.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): Sand, gravel, and other aggregate are added to the economic products to be examined by the geological survey. In addition, aggregate is added to the type of resource maps to be distributed by the state geologist.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute Bill: PRO: This bill is significant in that it builds on past legislation for the state geological survey. DNR wants to update and modernize the state survey and make the data available to the public. Geological surveys around the world have gone to this model. For our state it is important to establish a system to stop the loss of vital geological data.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Vicki Christiansen, Ron Teissere, DNR.