

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5008

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the establishment of The Pacific Northwest Economic Region.

Brief Description: Establishing the Pacific Northwest Economic Region.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Senators Bluechel, Gaspard, Hayner, Snyder, Matson, Vognild, Cantu, McMullen, von Reichbauer, Nelson, McDonald, Barr, Sellar, Bailey, Moore, Conner and Bauer).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Trade & Economic Development, March 28, 1991, DP;
Appropriations, April 8, 1991, DP;
Passed House, April 16, 1991, 98-0;
Passed Legislature, 98-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 8 members:
Representatives Cantwell, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair;
Forner, Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff, Assistant
Ranking Minority Member; Ferguson; Kremen; Rasmussen; and
Riley.

Staff: Bill Watterson (786-7349).

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 28 members:
Representatives Locke, Chair; Inslee, Vice Chair; Spanel,
Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Morton,
Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Belcher;
Bowman; Braddock; Dorn; Ebersole; Ferguson; Fuhrman; Hine;
Holland; Lisk; May; McLean; Mielke; Nealey; Peery; Pruitt;
Rust; H. Sommers; Valle; Vance; Wang; and Wineberry.

Staff: Susan Nakagawa (786-7145).

Background: During 1989 and 1990 the Washington State Legislature and the Northwest Policy Center at the University of Washington sponsored the first and second annual meeting of legislators from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Alberta, and British Columbia. The 1989 meeting focused on the feasibility of establishing greater regional collaboration. In 1990, a work plan was developed for 1991. This plan seeks to establish cooperation in six areas:

- (1) expanding environmental enterprise;
- (2) creating markets for recycled materials;
- (3) expanding markets for value-added wood products;
- (4) improving telecommunications in higher education;
- (5) investing in the future work force; and
- (6) promoting tourism development.

Summary of Bill: The Pacific Northwest Economic Region is formed as a regional organization involving the legislative bodies of participating states and provinces. Policy areas of particular interest include: international trade, economic development, human resources, the environment and natural resources, energy, and education. The states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington and the Canadian provinces of Alberta and British Columbia are eligible to participate in the organization.

The agreement to act as a regional entity is effective when one state, one province, and one additional state or province agree to participate in the organization. Washington agrees to participate in the organization should it become effective. Renunciation of the agreement by any party requires one year's notice in writing to the other parties.

The organization shall consist of a delegate council and an executive committee. The delegate council is composed of four legislators from each member state or province. The executive committee is composed of one delegate council member from each participating state or province. Legislators are appointed by their home state or province.

The organization's substantive actions may include uniform legislation and policy initiatives of interest to the region. Members may selectively support these initiatives.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: Yes.

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

Testimony For: (Trade & Economic Development): The seven states and provinces of the Pacific Northwest have the opportunity to cooperatively address common economic concerns. These include: 1) promoting the region as an international tourist destination; 2) developing markets for recycled materials; 3) marketing the region as the world's leading supplier of environmental technology; 4) raising workforce skills and education standards in the Northwest; 5) expanding markets for value-added wood products; and 6) linking the region's educational institutions through expanded telecommunications networks.

(Appropriations): None.

Testimony Against: (Trade & Economic Development): None.

(Appropriations): None.

Witnesses: (Trade & Economic Development): Senator Alan Bluechel, prime sponsor; and David Harrison, Northwest Policy Center (supports bill).

(Appropriations): None.