

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1785

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to investing in the creation of jobs to restore and enhance Washington's estuaries, waterways, forests, and watersheds.

Brief Description: Creating jobs to restore and enhance Washington's estuaries, waterways, forests, and watersheds.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Environmental Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Locke, J. Kohl, Rust, Jacobsen, Wineberry, Shin, Dunshee, Holm, Pruitt, Jones, Finkbeiner, King, Basich, Quall, Orr, Johanson, Leonard and Anderson.)

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Environmental Affairs, March 3, 1993, DPS;
Appropriations, March 6, 1993, DPS(ENA-A APP);
Passed House, March 13, 1993, 85-13;
Amended by Senate.
Conference Committee Report adopted.
Passed Legislature, April 25, 1993, 81-17.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Rust, Chair; Flemming, Vice Chair; Horn, Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Foreman; Holm; L. Johnson; J. Kohl; Linville; and Roland.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Van Luven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson; Hansen; and Sheahan.

Staff: Rick Anderson (786-7114).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Environmental Affairs be substituted therefor and the substitute bill as amended by Committee on Appropriations do pass. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Locke, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Ballasiotes;

Basich; Cooke; Dellwo; Dorn; Dunshee; G. Fisher; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Linville; Peery; Rust; Sehlin; Sommers; Wang; Wineberry; and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Sheahan; Stevens; and Talcott.

Staff: Nancy Stevenson (786-7137).

Background: Local governments are required to develop several types of water-related plans. Examples of these planning requirements include: shoreline management plans, stormwater plans, drinking water plans, flood plans, and watershed action plans. These plans often identify actions necessary to improve existing problems, but financing for these actions is often difficult to obtain.

Natural resource based industries are, and have historically been, an important part of the state's economy. These industries are in relative decline as compared to other sectors of the state's economy, such as aerospace and agriculture.

Water quality and habit degradation is negatively affecting many of these natural resource based industries.

There are efforts at the state and national level to find creative ways to finance ready-to-go projects that create jobs and improve water quality and habitats.

Summary of Bill: The environment and forest restoration account is established in the state treasury. The account is to be funded by principal and interest repayments, and through unspecified state and federal funds. Money in the account is subject to legislative appropriation. State and local agencies, tribes, and private non-profit organizations are eligible for grants and loans from the account. For fiscal years 1994 through 1998, 50 percent of the funds must be awarded to rural communities to employ displaced timber workers. After 1998, 50 percent of the funds must be awarded to counties with unemployment rates greater than the state average. At least 10 percent of annual revenues are to be used for the Washington Conservation Corps. At least 5 percent of the funds must be awarded to non-profit organizations. No more than 3 percent can be used for administration. The account may not be used to hire permanent state employees except for essential administration and supervisory positions.

An environmental enhancement and job creation task force is created within the Office of the Governor. The 8 member task force consists of state agencies responsible for

natural resource management or economic development. The task force has four principle duties: 1) to assist state and local agencies in implementing effective restoration projects; 2) to evaluate unemployment profile data; 3) to make recommendations to streamline grant administration for restoration programs and 4) to make funding decisions on environmental and forest restoration projects. Projects funded must meet specified criteria. The task force is directed to avoid funding projects that include rule-making, planning, or public education activities.

Funding for fiscal year 1994 projects is to be provided through the operating and capital budgets. Legislative priorities for 1994 are specified. The governor is directed to consider using unanticipated federal funds for environmental restoration and job creation.

A process is established to make it easier for workers that have completed a job funded under this chapter to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits. Workers that are successfully participating in an environmental restoration training program under this chapter are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits while in training.

The Washington Conservation Corps program is extended from July 1, 1995 to June 30, 1999 and is made subject to sunset review. The Legislative Budget Committee is required to evaluate the implementation of this act by June 30, 1998.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 9, 1993.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the section establishing watershed action teams is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: (Environmental Affairs) The bill will create jobs and improve the environment by implementing existing plans. The bill will restore funding to Washington Conservation Corps. The corps provides jobs and skills to disadvantaged youth while implementing important restoration projects at low cost. The bill will help the shellfish industries by improving water quality. New and existing cars create water pollution mainly through emissions and wear from brake linings and tires.

(Appropriations) The bill accomplishes important watershed, fish habitat, and forest restoration projects and creates jobs for displaced workers. However, do not fund these projects at the expense of existing programs. Keep looking for possible fund sources. Please consider an amendment to provide for family wages. This bill can be a part of an overall recovery package.

Testimony Against: (Environmental Affairs) New cars should not be taxed because they create less pollution than older cars and because new cars are already extensively taxed. Recreational boaters should not be required to pay additional taxes. The bill will tax bunker fuel and cause disruptions in the shipping industry.

(Appropriations) None.

Witnesses: (Environmental Affairs) Representative Gary Locke, Prime Sponsor (pro); Representative Jeanne Kohl (pro); Kathy Fletcher, People for Puget Sound (pro); Fred Olson, Ak-WA Incorporated (con); Jenny Coffing, citizen (pro); Ward Sagen, citizen (pro); Mark Greenberg, Pacific Northern Oil (con); Ray Shindler, Purse Seine Vessel Owners Association (pro); Jim Boldt, Washington Auto Dealers Association (pro with amendments); Joan Thomas, Washington Environmental Council (pro); Larry Phillips, King County Council (pro); Mike Ryherd, Washington Wildlife Recreation Coalition (pro); Sally Hicks, Department of Fisheries Manager, Retired (pro); and Ron Wagner, Blackball Transport (concerns).

(Appropriations) Naki Stevens, People for Puget Sound (pro); Bruce Wishert, Sierra Club (pro); Ralph Mackey, Washington Environmental Council (pro); and Jeff Parsons, National Audubon (pro).