

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**ESSB 5454**

**AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 13, 1993**

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

**SPONSORS:** Senate Committee on Trade, Technology & Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Skratek, Barr, Haugen, Pelz, Prentice, Owen, Niemi, von Reichbauer, Quigley and M. Rasmussen)

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRADE, TECHNOLOGY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5454 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Skratek, Chairman; Sheldon, Vice Chairman; Bluechel, Deccio, Erwin, M. Rasmussen, and Williams.

**Staff:** Jack Brummel (786-7428)

**Hearing Dates:** February 16, 1993; March 2, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

According to a recent Massachusetts Institute of Technology study, states with strong environmental programs also have the healthiest economies. The study buttresses the belief of many economic development practitioners in Washington State that the long-term health of our economy depends on the health, sustainable management, and development of our natural resources. Washington's water resources provide livelihood for thousands of citizens, yet are threatened by continuing degradation. Job creation proponents have agreed with environmentalists that creating jobs for the unemployed that enhance the water quality of the state's watersheds can both increase the long-term viability of water-based industries and give the unemployed new career opportunities.

**SUMMARY:**

The environmental and forest restoration account is created in the State Treasury. Money in the account is available for forest and stream restoration, for improving water quality in the Puget Sound basin, and for projects which improve water quality outside the Puget Sound basin. No more than 5 percent of the funds in the account can be used for administrative purposes. At least 10 percent shall be allocated to the Washington Conservation Corps and at least 5 percent shall be used by nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations. No single project may receive more than 5 percent of the annual revenue to the account.

The Environmental Enhancement and Job Creation Task Force is created. The task force reviews proposals for use of funds in the environmental and forest restoration account and awards funds for approved projects. The environmental and forest restoration account is not funded.

Project evaluation criteria include: cost effectiveness; quantification of improvements to water or habitat quality; the number of jobs created; use of environmental businesses in training; and the prospect for high skill, long-term jobs. Preference for project employment is given to the unemployed. Employees hired on projects are not considered state employees but shall receive benefits equivalent to state employees and, except for Conservation Corps employees who work for minimum wage, shall receive twice the minimum wage.

The Puget Sound Water Quality Authority termination date is extended from June 30, 1995 to June 30, 1999. The Legislative Budget Committee is to evaluate the implementation of this act by June 30, 1998.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** yes

**Fiscal Note:** requested February 5, 1993

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Environmental improvement can put people to work. Jobs that improve the environment are important jobs but we haven't had the financial resources to provide these jobs. The bill's use of the Washington Conservation Corps would help instill a conservation ethic and work ethic for more youth. Water quality plans need to get off the shelf and get implemented.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

The marine fuel tax could have a detrimental effect on local economies and drive people away from recreational boating. The new automobile tax will create a disincentive to buy new automobiles.

**TESTIFIED:** Jim Boldt, Washington Auto Dealers Association; Kathy Fletcher, Naki Stevens, People for Puget Sound (pro); Willie Briscoe, Washington Conservation Corps (pro); Bruce Wishart, Sierra Club (pro); Donald F. Samuelson, Grays Harbor College (pro); Randy Ray, PSSOA/MEC/PSPA; Rick Wickman, Portland Steamship Operators; Eric Johnson, Washington Public Ports Association; Mik Hendrickson, Port of Ilwaco; David Waldschmidt, Mark Greenberg, Pacific Northern Oil; Judy Turpin, Washington Environmental Council (pro); Larry Phillips, Puget Sound Water Quality Authority (pro); Hall Schlomann, Northwest Marine Trade Association (con); Lisa Lewis, U.S. Forest Service (pro); Sally Hicks, retired Fisheries manager (pro); Carl Menconi, Youth Corps consultant (pro); Steve Lansing, Lutheran Public Policy Office (pro); Ron Wagner, Blackball Transport (con); Ray Shindler, Purse Seine

Vessel Owners Association (pro); Ed Owens, Coalition of Washington Ocean Fishermen (con); Kris Backes, AWB; Jim Austin, American Automobile Manufacturers Association (con); Dave Williams, Recreational Boaters Association of Washington (con); Bill Fritz, Self-Boaters (con); Bob Mack, METRO; Kathleen Collins, AWC; Jeff Parsons, National Audubon Society (pro); Ed Thorpe, Clean Water Coalition