

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1499

C 377 L 97

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Establishing a rural development council.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Trade & Economic Development (originally sponsored by Representatives Schoesler, Sheahan, Doumit, Morris, Tokuda, Kessler, Scott and Dickerson; by request of Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development).

House Committee on Trade & Economic Development
Senate Committee on Commerce & Labor

Background: The Rural Development Council is a public-private collaborative effort designed to improve the delivery and accessibility of resources to rural communities. The Rural Development Council is part of a national initiative, the National Rural Development Partnership, that addresses rural economic development, human and social services, physical infrastructure, and environmental conservation issues in a collaborative, strategic and bottom-up fashion.

There are 37 state rural development councils across the country. The Washington State Rural Development Council was one of eight pilot councils authorized in 1990. The Washington State Rural Development Council (WSRDC) is staffed by a full-time executive director, and governed by a volunteer executive committee comprised of representatives from the private, nonprofit, and local, state, federal and tribal government sectors.

The WSRDC is funded from a federal matching grant that provides 75 percent of the operating funds, and remaining funds are provided in grants or in-kind contributions from other non-federal sources. The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development provides administrative and clerical support to the WSRDC.

Summary: The Washington State Rural Development Council (WSRDC) is established in statute. The WSRDC is governed by an executive committee that consists of 11 members appointed by the Governor. The executive committee consists of representatives of business, natural resources, agriculture, environment, economic development, education, health, human services, counties, cities and tribal governments. At least 90 percent of the members of the executive committee must reside in rural areas.

The Governor makes appointments of new members to the executive committee for three-year terms as follows: four members are appointed in 1997, four are members appointed in 1998, and three members are appointed in 1999. The members of the executive committee are reimbursed for travel expenses.

The duties of the WSRDC include (1) informing the Governor, Legislature, and state and federal agencies on rural community development issues; (2) identifying and recommending improvements to existing resource delivery systems; and (3) serving as a liaison between rural communities and public and private resource providers.

State agencies are encouraged to contribute financially to the council. All federal agencies, state agencies, and statewide associations that make a significant contribution to the WSRDC are considered ex officio members.

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development may provide staff support, administrative assistance, and office space to the WSRDC. The WSRDC expires June 30, 2003.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 93 0
Senate 45 0 (Senate amended)
House 91 1 (House concurred)

Effective: July 27, 1997