

February 13, 1997

BILL ANALYSIS

TO: Members, Committee on Trade and Economic Development
FROM: Kenny Pittman, Research Analyst (786-7392)
RE: **HB 1499 - Establishing a rural development council.**

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/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, Washington's rural development council was one of eight pilot councils authorized in 1990. The Washington State Rural Development Council (Council) 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 council is Funded from a federal matching grant that provides 75 percent of the operating funds and remaining funds are provided in grant or in-kind contribution from other non-federal sources. The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development provides administrative and clerical support to the council under its general duties and powers.

SUMMARY:

The Washington State Rural Development Council (Council) is established in statute. The council is governed by an executive council that consist 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.

New members to the executive committee are appointed to three-year terms as follows: Four members are appointed in 1997, four 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 council include: (1) Informing the Governor, Legislature, 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 financially contribute to the council. All federal agencies, state agencies, and state-wide associations that make a significant contribution to the council are considered ex officio nonvoting members.

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

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 1997.