

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Olympia Washington

BilAnalysis

Bill No. HB 1579

Membership/Columbia River Gorge Commission
Brief title

Public Arg: 2/14/97

Reps. Boldt/Dunn/Pennington
Sponsor

Staff Contact Mike Spiro
Comm. on Govt. Admin.
Phone: 786-5793

BACKGROUND:

The Columbia River Gorge Commission (the commission) is a regional agency responsible for implementing the Columbia River Gorge Compact (the compact) an interstate compact entered into by the states of Washington and Oregon with the consent of Congress. The compact also incorporates the federal Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act (the federal act).

Interstate compacts are formal contractual agreements between two or more states. Under Article I, Sec. 10, Cl. 3 of the U.S. Constitution no state may enter into any agreement or compact with another state without the consent of Congress.

The Columbia River Gorge Commission may disapprove a land use ordinance enacted by a county within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area if that ordinance is inconsistent with the management plan adopted by the commission. The commission may enact a land use ordinance setting standards for the use of non-federal land in a county within the National Scenic Area if that county fails to enact land use ordinances that are consistent with the management plan.

The commission consists of 12 voting members appointed by the state and one non-voting member appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. The governor of each state is to appoint three members who reside in that state as provided by the federal Act, one of which must be a resident of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. One additional member must be appointed by the governing body of each of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area counties of Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania in Washington and Hood River, Multnomah, and Wasco in Oregon. If the governing body of a county fails to make an appointment, the Governor of the state in which that county is located must appoint such a member. The terms of the members and the procedures for filling vacancies must be in accordance with the federal act.

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SUMMARY:

The Columbia River Gorge Commission must work with the Washington State Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development to assist the Washington Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area counties in developing and use ordinances that are consistent with the commission's management plan.

The governing body of each of the Washington counties located in the national scenic area no longer appoints a member to the Columbia River Gorge Commission. Instead, one member from each such county is to be nominated at a primary election and elected at a general election by the registered voters of that county.

In Washington, the terms of the members and the procedures for filling member vacancies no longer will be as set forth in the federal act. Those terms and procedures are now to be filled in accordance with Washington State law concerning the filling of elected nonpartisan vacancies.

FISCAL NOTE: Not requested.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.