

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1017

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, March 27, 1997

Title: An act relating to exchanges of state-owned aquatic lands with privately owned lands under the public interest standard.

Brief Description: Exchanging state-owned aquatic lands with privately owned lands.

Sponsors: House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Sehlin, Anderson, Koster, Quall, Huff, L. Thomas and Dunn).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 3/21/97, 3/27/97 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Jacobsen, Morton, Prentice, Roach, Snyder, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: The Department of Natural Resources manages over two million acres of state-owned aquatic lands. These aquatic lands were granted to the state at statehood and include tidelands, shorelands, and bedlands. Approximately 40 percent of the state's original endowment of tidelands, 70 percent of the original shorelands, and all of the state's bedlands remain in public ownership.

The department has specific authority to lease and exchange state-owned tidelands and shorelands. State law provides specific guidelines as to how the department may exercise its authority to lease or exchange state-owned aquatic lands. State-owned aquatic lands— is defined as aquatic lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or the ports. Aquatic lands managed by other state agencies are specifically excluded from this definition.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Parks and Recreation Commission also manage state lands. Some of the lands managed by these agencies are aquatic lands (tidelands and shorelands).

Summary of Bill: The management of a 3,000 square foot area of aquatic lands along the Stillaguamish River is transferred from the DNR to WDFW. WDFW is authorized to exchange its aquatic land holdings if the exchange would provide significantly better fish and wildlife habitat or public water access.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This exchange is in the best interest of the state since it trades lands which cannot be used by the public for prime recreational lands with substantial water access.

Testimony Against: This is not needed since DNR can lease the aquatic lands used by private companies.

Testified: PRO: Don Heitmann, Twin City Foods; Laura Lewis, Snohomish County Developmental Council; Bill Fritz, Washington Food Processors Council; CON: Stan Biles, DNR.