

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHJM 4025

As of February 17, 1998

Brief Description: Protecting and managing the Hanford Reach.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives Chandler, Lisk and Mulliken).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Environment: 2/24/98.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Staff: Paul Mabrey (786-7412)

Background: Hanford Reach is a 51 mile stretch of the Columbia River that provides 80 percent of the fall Chinook salmon in the river system. It is a critical habitat for wildlife, a high quality waterfowl sanctuary and a scenic, historic, and recreational resource for the public.

The land adjacent to Hanford Reach should be managed properly in order to protect fish, wildlife, scenic, cultural, and recreational resources while preserving access to the region. The purpose of the Columbia River Habitat and Recreational Access Act of 1997 (the Act), enacted by the United States Congress, is to provide long-term habitat and wildlife management, recreational opportunity preservation, and responsible, environmentally sound land use policy for the land adjacent to the Reach.

Under the provisions of the Act, the Secretary of Energy will convey, for no consideration, all right, title, and interest to certain properties adjacent to Hanford Reach under prescribed terms and conditions. Among the terms and conditions, the Act requires that the state of Washington to enter into a written joint agreement with the counties of Benton, Franklin, and Grant to establish the Hanford Reach Protection Management Commission. The commission shall develop and implement a plan to manage the conveyed lands in order to protect and enhance plant, fish, wildlife, and cultural resources while maintaining recreational access.

The Act further provides that if the state fails to meet its obligations under the provisions of the Act, all right, title, and interest in the conveyed property will be transferred to the counties. Subsequently, if the counties do not fulfill their obligations under the Act, the conveyed properties revert to the U.S. Government.

Summary of Bill: The U.S. Congress is requested to join with the state in creating a Hanford Reach Protection and Management Commission, composed as prescribed in the Columbia River Habitat and Recreational Access Act of 1997, that grants local residents an authoritative voice rather than an advisory role.

The memorial further requests that:

- lands owned by the United States in the Hanford Reach area be conveyed to the state of Washington and to Adams, Grant, and Franklin Counties for management as prescribed and authorized in the Columbia River Habitat and Recreational Access Act of 1997; and
- the commission develop and implement a plan to manage the conveyed lands in order to protect and enhance plant resources, fish and wildlife resources, cultural resources, recreational access, and other uses or resources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.