

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6246

As of January 26, 1998

Title: An act relating to permits for the enhancement of riparian habitat adjacent to cropped or pastured areas.

Brief Description: Regarding permits for the enhancement of riparian habitat.

Sponsors: Senators Swecker and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Environment: 1/28/98.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: Consideration is being given to the establishment of a voluntary program whereby owners of land used for crop or pasture may enroll areas adjacent to rivers and stream and to plant trees, shrubs and willows in these areas. Currently, site preparation and associated activities needed for planting of trees and shrubs in riparian areas may require landowners to obtain permits from state or local governmental agencies. Permits contain conditions that landowners are required to follow.

To expedite restoration of habitat in riparian areas, to encourage landowner participation in the Conservation Reserve State Enhancement Program, to reduce state and local agency staffing requirements, and to reduce costs and time delays associated with securing permits, a process to streamline the permit process is being considered.

Summary of Bill: The State Conservation Commission must develop technical standards for planting trees and shrubs in riparian areas and publish these technical standards in a pamphlet. The pamphlet is provided to participating landowners and is available to persons providing technical assistance to landowners.

The technical standards are developed by an advisory committee comprised of representatives from state, local and tribal governments, agricultural organizations and environmental organizations. The technical standards are adopted by rule and would replace any permits that would otherwise be required under the Shoreline Management Act, the Hydraulic Code, the Water Pollution Control Act, and local critical area regulations adopted under the Growth Management Act.

Persons who violate the technical standards contained in the pamphlet are not exempt from the existing permit and penalty provisions of enumerated state and local laws.

Appropriation: \$150,000.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 1998.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.