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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 4409**

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**State of Washington**

**55th Legislature**

**1997 Regular Session**

**By** House Committee on Government Reform & Land Use (originally sponsored by Representatives Thompson, Reams, Bush, Mielke, Sherstad, Pennington, Sheldon, Grant, Kastama, McMorris and Mastin)

Read first time 03/05/97.

1       WHEREAS, The legislature recognizes the importance of preserving  
2 the environment and protecting critical areas to ensure that the state  
3 retains its natural beauty and diversity of wildlife; and

4       WHEREAS, The legislature recognizes the complexity of the challenge  
5 of balancing the interests of preserving the natural surroundings while  
6 ensuring that people may alter their surroundings in harmony with the  
7 environment if they are given proper guidance and direction by  
8 definitions set forth in the laws of the state; and

9       WHEREAS, State law defines wetlands extremely broadly to include  
10 areas saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency or duration  
11 sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for  
12 life in saturated soil conditions but provides little accurate criteria  
13 for determining that wetlands conditions exist; and

14       WHEREAS, The current definition of wetlands places too great an  
15 emphasis on temporary rather than long-term conditions; and

16       WHEREAS, Local governments interpret the definition of wetlands so  
17 broadly that the residents of this state are unduly encumbered and the  
18 quality of their lives threatened by arbitrary decisions with respect  
19 to wetlands classification or designation; and

20       WHEREAS, The economic well-being of the state overall is threatened  
21 by lack of specificity in the definition of wetlands;

1       NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the Senate of the state of  
2 Washington, the House of Representatives concurring, That a joint  
3 select subcommittee on wetlands be established to review the statutory  
4 definition of wetlands and all related issues associated with the  
5 definition and regulation of wetlands, to provide reasonable  
6 flexibility in the law and certainty, guidance, and notice to property  
7 owners; and

8       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee consist of ten members,  
9 five members of the Senate, three members from the majority caucus and  
10 two members from the minority caucus, appointed by the President of the  
11 Senate, and five members of the House of Representatives, three members  
12 from the majority caucus and two members from the minority caucus,  
13 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

14       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee report its findings and  
15 recommendations to the legislature at the regular session held in 1998.

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