

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 1204

Brief Description: Coordination of environmental restoration and land acquisition.

Sponsors: Representative K. Schmidt, Fisher, Romero, Mitchell, Chandler, Murray, Linville and Wood

Brief Summary of Bill

·Creates a work group of state agencies to coordinate environmental projects funded in the capital and transportation budgets.

Background:

The 1997-99 Capital Budget directed all state agencies receiving money in the capital budget or the transportation budget for land acquisition and environmental mitigation and restoration to coordinate those activities. The intent of the directive was to provide greater emphasis on shared resource management; improve ecological benefits gained from state expenditures; and increase mitigation credit opportunities for the Department of Transportation. The mitigation credits were not intended to reduce the Department of Transportation mitigation obligations, but to reduce the cost of those obligations.

The Office of Financial Management was directed to report to the fiscal committees of the legislature on the results of the coordination of these environmental activities and make recommendations to further improve the coordination among state agencies to achieve better cost efficiencies and ecological benefits. The report was due on December 1, 1998.

Summary:

A work group is created whose members include the Interagency Commission for Outdoor Recreation, the Conservation Commission, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Natural Resources, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Ecology, and any other state agencies receiving appropriations from the capital budget or the transportation budget for land acquisition, environmental restoration, or environmental mitigation activities.

The members of the work group are to:

- 1) coordinate land acquisitions and environmental activities;
- 2) review and summarize agency funding mechanisms for the distribution of funds and agencies that distribute funds shall include incentives to grant and loan applications based on coordination of projects;

- 3) review and summarize planning process for project development;
- 4) create a comprehensive data base to enable coordination of funds and projects;
- 5) make recommendations for coordinating grant applications and funding cycles;
- 6) develop procedures for evaluating data to implement coordination;
- 7) disseminate project information among state agencies;
- 8) track project costs, benefits, and project administration; and
- 9) evaluate opportunities for incentives and outreach activities to facilitate coordination with other entities that provide money for transportation corridor improvements.

The Office of Financial Management is to report to the legislature on the number of coordinated projects, costs, benefits and process improvements by December 31, 2000.

Appropriation: None

Fiscal Note: Requested, but not yet received.

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