

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 3076

C 101 L 00

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Convening a work group on streamlining project permit processes.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives G. Chandler, Fisher, Mitchell, Cooper, Hankins, Skinner, Ericksen, McDonald, Radcliff, Mulliken and Pflug).

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

Background:

State, federal, and local environmental regulations, several of which have their own permitting requirements, are administered by several different agencies. As a result, environmental permits can be delayed when review processes are done in sequence rather than concurrently. Congress recognized these process delays in the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) where it required federal agencies to seek innovative ways to coordinate permit streamlining.

An example of permit streamlining involves the Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Environmental Affairs Office working with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to receive federal delegation of the biological assessment process associated with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The WSDOT demonstrated a process acceptable to the federal agency responsible for ESA permitting and the federal agency delegated ESA permitting authority to the WSDOT. This eliminates at least one level of review and speeds up the permitting process without compromising the integrity of the process. The federal Department of Transportation and the FHWA become auditors of the program, thus enabling limited staff to focus on overall statewide compliance.

Summary of Bill:

A work group is convened to evaluate the applicability of Federal Transportation Certification Acceptance Programs to environmental processes. The workshop includes the following partners: the WSDOT; the Department of Ecology; the Department of Fish and Wildlife; and representatives from cities and counties. The group is charged with presenting a report to the Legislature by December 1, 2000.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 95 0
Senate 47 0

Effective: June 8, 2000