

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5536

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation, February 15, 1999
Ways & Means, March 8, 1999

Title: An act relating to state forest lands and municipal drinking water protection.

Brief Description: Requiring a review and report on the adequacy of department of natural resources management plans of forest lands within watersheds.

Sponsors: Senators Spanel and Gardner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 2/4/99, 2/15/99 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 3/1/99, 3/8/99 [DP2S].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5536 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Oke, Snyder and Spanel.

Staff: Victor Moon (786-7469)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5536 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Honeyford, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Long, McDonald, Rasmussen, Roach, Rossi, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, West, Winsley, Wojahn and Zarelli.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: Local governments have expressed concern over the impact of timber harvest within municipal watersheds. Under existing law, a city or town may request that the Department of Natural Resources alter land management practices within a watershed to ensure that drinking water exceeds water quality standards.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: The Department of Natural Resources must initiate a pilot project in the Lake Whatcom watershed to determine what management actions could be taken to achieve water quality standards beyond those required by state law. The department must establish an advisory committee with representatives of state agencies, local governments, and citizens.

The pilot project must be completed by June 30, 2000. All timber sales within the Lake Whatcom watershed must be deferred until the pilot project is complete.

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The review of timber sales in municipal watersheds is narrowed to the Lake Whatcom watershed. An advisory committee is created. The appropriation clause is removed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The watershed areas covered by the bill are reduced in number by increasing the number of connections and the study is extended to be due in 2001. The Board of Natural Resources will postpone timber harvest until after the study is complete.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): The effects of clear-cut logging on watersheds have not been studied fully. Clean drinking water and adequate water supply is required. The Department of Natural Resources needs to work with local governments and with private citizens more closely.

Testimony Against (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): The bill as introduced affected too many watersheds and would have a negative effect on trust land income.

Testified (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): PRO: Bill Black, Alabama Hill Assn.; Jeff Monsen, Whatcom County; Dick Little, Don Keenan, City of Bellingham; CON: Paul Silver, WA Dept. of Natural Resources.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): The Lake Whatcom watershed is the sole water supply for the City of Bellingham. This bill would ensure that harvest activities do not degrade water quality.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): This will result in lost income to the counties.

Testified (Ways & Means): Dick Little, City of Bellingham (pro); Scott Merriman, Department of Natural Resources (concerns).