

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SSB 6731

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Creating a Lake Whatcom landscape plan.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Spanel and Gardner).

Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

House Committee on Natural Resources

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Some municipal watersheds are owned by the municipalities, but in most cases the ownership is mixed between public and private lands. In the case of the Whatcom County watershed which serves the city of Bellingham, the land includes private lands and county Forest Board and federally granted state trust lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources. The Legislature asked that a Lake Whatcom watershed study be done during 1999 and that the Department of Natural Resources and the committee formed by the 1999 law report back in the year 2000 to assess the costs and values related to protection of the watershed.

Summary: The Department of Natural Resources must develop a landscape management plan for state forest land in the Lake Whatcom watershed area. The department must consult with other major forest landowners and watershed residents in developing the plan. The plan must establish riparian management zones along all streams. The department must manage the lands within such zones to protect water quality and riparian habitat.

Road construction and timber harvest on potentially unstable slopes is carefully regulated. On unstable slopes, new road construction is prohibited and old road reconstruction is limited. The department must create and implement a sustained yield model specific to Lake Whatcom consistent with the statewide model. The management plan must be completed and implemented by June 30, 2001. Timber harvest and road construction within the watershed must be delayed until the plan is completed.

Votes on Final Passage:

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|--------|----|---|--------------------|
| Senate | 45 | 0 | |
| House | 98 | 0 | (House amended) |
| Senate | 44 | 0 | (Senate concurred) |

Effective: June 8, 2000