
Natural Resources Committee

HB 2575

Brief Description: Authorizing the creation of marine resource committees.

Sponsors: Representatives Rockefeller, Ericksen, Uptegrove, Linville, Doumit and Lysen.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes cities and counties to form marine protection committees that are eligible to be funded from the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account.
- Creates the Puget Sound Marine Protection Task Force.

Hearing Date: 2/8/02

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

In 1996 the Legislature enacted a comprehensive coordination program to address water quality protection in Puget Sound. As part of this legislation, the Puget Sound Action Team (team) was created. The team consists of appointed federal, state, local, and tribal leaders, and is charged with various duties, including the development of a Puget Sound work plan, coordinating research efforts in the Sound, and coordinating permit issuance.

In its work plan, the team recognized the importance of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). MPAs are areas of intertidal or subtidal terrain that have been reserved for the protection of their enclosed environment. In Puget Sound, there are numerous MPAs designated, with various goals and levels of restriction. These areas are designated by state and federal agencies, local governments, the University of Washington, and the Nature Conservancy.

Summary of Bill:

The Departments of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), Ecology (DOE), and Natural Resources (DNR), along with the Puget Sound Action Team and the Parks and Recreation Commission (Parks) must work together with local authorities to establish a scientifically defensible network of marine protected areas in the Puget Sound.

Each city and county bordering Puget Sound has the authority to establish a marine resource committee (committee). In addition, the residents of counties or cities may petition their local government for the formation of a committee. These committees must address the needs of the local marine ecosystem by gathering new data about the health of local marine resources, making scientifically-based recommendations on local candidate sites for marine protected areas, working closely with local and state officials to implement the recommendations, and by engaging in any other activity deemed appropriate.

The committee must contain balanced representation of local governments, scientific experts, and the effected interests of recreation, economy, and conservation. When creating a committee, the local government must coordinate and cooperate with all special districts within its boundaries. The legislative authorities of neighboring counties and cities are also encouraged to coordinate their efforts. The committees may seek funding from the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account.

The Puget Sound Marine Protection Task Force (task force) is created. The task force is chaired by the Puget Sound Action Team and includes representation from the DFW, DOE, DNR, and Parks. By the end of 2002, the task force must report to the Legislature on ways in which state and local efforts to establish marine protected areas, marine reserves, and similar areas can be better coordinated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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