

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6581

As of January 30, 2002

Title: An act relating to Puget Sound marine resource committees.

Brief Description: Authorizing the creation of marine resource committees.

Sponsors: Senators Poulsen, Jacobsen, Spanel and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines: 2/6/02.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: There are currently a number of marine sites in Puget Sound with some form of management in place to protect marine species. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has designated 15 marine protected areas in Puget Sound where fishing is limited or prohibited. The Department of Natural Resources has established a number of aquatic reserves, and is currently in the process of developing rules to govern management and future selection of aquatic reserve sites. San Juan County has established a local system of voluntary reserves.

Marine resources committees have been formed by the seven counties in northern Puget Sound that make up the Northwest Straits Commission. These marine resources committees set priorities for marine habitat protection, sponsor restoration projects, and make recommendations on methods for long-term protection.

Concerns have been raised that the existing system of marine reserves is not well coordinated, and local governments have not had adequate input into the designation of marine reserves.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Ecology, the Department of Natural Resources, the Puget Sound Action Team, and State Parks must work together to establish a scientifically defensible network of marine protected areas in Puget Sound. The agencies must report to the Legislature by December 31, 2002 on ways in which state and local efforts to establish marine protected areas and reserves can be better coordinated and ensure protection of marine resources.

Any city or county that borders Puget Sound may establish a marine resource committee. Members of the committee must include local government, scientific experts, and representatives of economic, recreational, and environmental interests. Committees must review current data and programs, recommend local candidate sites for marine protected areas, and promote public outreach and education on marine issues.

The uses of the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account are expanded to include funding of local marine resources committees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2002.

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