

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6217

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Natural Resources, Energy & Water, February 5, 2004  
Ways & Means, February 9, 2004

**Title:** An act relating to regulatory improvement.

**Brief Description:** Creating the Washington regulatory improvement center.

**Sponsors:** Senators Swecker, Prentice, Doumit, Berkey, Morton, Rasmussen, Hale, Jacobsen, Hargrove, Regala, Finkbeiner, T. Sheldon, Horn, Esser, Oke and Haugen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources, Energy & Water: 1/29/04, 2/5/04 [DPS-WM, DNP].  
Ways & Means: 2/9/04 [DP2S].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & WATER

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6217 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Morton, Chair; Hewitt, Vice Chair; Doumit, Fraser, Hale, Hargrove, Honeyford and Oke.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Regala.

**Staff:** Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6217 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Chair; Hewitt, Vice Chair; Parlette, Vice Chair; Carlson, Doumit, Fraser, Hale, Honeyford, Johnson, Pflug, Prentice, Rasmussen, Roach, Sheahan, B. Sheldon and Winsley.

**Staff:** Brian Sims (786-7431)

**Background:** Concern continues to be expressed that federal, state, and local permits required for the purpose of protecting the environment can be time-consuming, conflicting, inconsistently applied, and redundant, without accomplishing their purpose or adequately involving the public.

**Summary of Second Substitute Bill:** The Washington Regulatory Improvement Project is created as a collaborative effort of private industry, state universities, and government to

improve economic competitiveness and environmental protection by revising and streamlining environmental permitting processes. The project may develop recommendations for programmatic permits, watershed-based environmental mitigation, new approaches to environmental permitting, and opportunities for improving public participation and environmental outcomes. Additional direction for each of these is given. Quarterly progress reports will be made.

The project will consist of members representing the state Legislature, the Office of Regulatory Assistance, the state natural resource agencies and Department of Transportation, cities, counties, ports, environmental interests, and the business community. Federal agencies, Indian tribes, state universities are invited to participate.

Recommendations for funding from public and private sources will also be developed.

**Second Substitute Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:** A null and void section is added.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The Regulatory Improvement Center is replaced by the Regulatory Improvement Project, which is authorized as a collaborative effort by the same entities on substantially the same activities.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** There are a number of regulatory improvement efforts under way, but there needs to be one whose products would be more generally applicable than TPEAC and have a broader scope than ORA. The concept of a larger effort is a good one, but the existing efforts need to be integrated into it and not discarded. The intent of this proposal is good, but the scope is too great. The existing efforts could be modified, instead of adding a new one. We need to focus on effectiveness, as well as efficiency.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Swecker, prime sponsor, (pro); **CONCERNS:** Kristen Sawin, AWB; Claire Hesselholt, Office of Regulatory Assistance; Ivy Sager-Rosenthal, WA PIRG; Jerry Smedes, NW Environmental Business Council.