
SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8033

State of Washington 58th Legislature 2004 Regular Session

By Senators Brown, McCaslin and Fraser

Read first time 01/22/2004. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water.

1 TO THE HONORABLE DIRK KEMPTHORNE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF IDAHO,
2 AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE IDAHO SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE IDAHO
3 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF
4 REPRESENTATIVES OF IDAHO:

5 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
6 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
7 represent and request as follows:

8 WHEREAS, The Spokane River and Couer d'Alene basins are a shared
9 watershed in which more than 400,000 people reside in communities in
10 both Washington state and Idaho; and

11 WHEREAS, The Couer d'Alene basin is one of the largest areas of
12 historic mining operations in the world, in which more than one hundred
13 million tons of mine waste are estimated to have been deposited in the
14 area's rivers, streams, and soils; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1983, a large area of the Spokane River/Couer d'Alene
16 basin within both Idaho and Washington was designated as a single site
17 under the federal Superfund law; and

18 WHEREAS, In 2001, the Idaho Legislature authorized creation of the
19 Basin Environmental Improvement Project Commission (hereinafter the

1 "Basin Commission"), for the purpose of guiding the cleanup and natural
2 resource restoration of that portion of the Superfund site within the
3 state of Idaho; and

4 WHEREAS, The Idaho Legislature subsequently authorized including a
5 Washington state member of the Basin Commission, but that member does
6 not share all of the voting and decisional authority of the rest of the
7 Basin Commission members; and

8 WHEREAS, Much of the mining waste contaminants are present in river
9 and stream sediments, or in soils that may wash into rivers and
10 streams, and therefore the downstream migration of contamination is an
11 ongoing concern to the entire watershed; and

12 WHEREAS, A comprehensive approach to cleanup of the entire
13 watershed is needed, in which scheduling and implementation of clean-up
14 activities are coordinated by all interests in both states; and

15 WHEREAS, A greater degree of bistrate cooperation and coordination
16 will lead to a greater degree of public health and environmental
17 protection, natural resource restoration, and economic benefits for all
18 residents and businesses in both states;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the Idaho
20 Legislature and Governor take action as follows:

21 (1) That the Basin Commission be modified expeditiously so that all
22 members have equal voting rights;

23 (2) That the membership of the Basin Commission be increased soon
24 to include a representative of the county commission of Spokane county
25 as appointed by the governor of the state of Washington; and

26 (3) That the state of Idaho enter into discussions with the state
27 of Washington with the objective of replacing the present commission
28 with a bistrate entity having the participation of local, state,
29 federal, and tribal governmental interests throughout the bistrate
30 watershed to coordinate the environmental remediation and natural
31 resource restoration throughout the portion of the Spokane River/Couer
32 d'Alene basin area designated under the federal Superfund law, and to
33 obtain state, federal, and tribal agreement to that entity not later
34 than December 31, 2006.

35 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
36 transmitted to the Honorable Dirk Kempthorne, Governor of the State of
37 Idaho, the President of the Idaho Senate and the Speaker of the Idaho

1 House of Representatives, and to each member of the Senate and House of
2 Representatives of Idaho.

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