

5969

Sponsor(s): Senators Haugen, Swecker and Rasmussen

Brief Description: Providing natural resource protection in Skagit county.

**SB 5969 - DIGEST**

(SUBSTITUTED FOR - SEE 1ST SUB)

Declares that the purposes of this act are: (1) To protect lands designated by the county as agricultural land of long-term commercial significance from the effects of saltwater intrusion and diminishment of drainage capability for drainage ditches and tide gates;

(2) To require examination of opportunities to enhance tidal fish habitat on hundreds of acres of publicly owned land while maintaining habitat for migratory birds; and

(3) To allow tide gates located on bona fide streams to proceed through a fish habitat restoration planning process to find opportunities to use fish habitat while avoiding harm to existing land uses.

Provides that, from funds appropriated to the department of fish and wildlife for salmon restoration activities, the fish and wildlife commission, in coordination with the Skagit county legislative authority and diking district commissioners, shall jointly develop a strategy to enhance tidal fish habitat and address the management, operation, and maintenance of tide gates on streams in Skagit county while assuring no net loss of agricultural lands or their productivity. The strategy must be submitted to the appropriate standing committees of the legislature by December 1, 2004.