
**Natural Resources, Ecology &
Parks Committee**

HB 2588

Brief Description: Authorizing small scale prospecting and mining on certain beach areas.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake, Buck, Takko, Buri, Williams, Roach, Eickmeyer, Linville, Kessler, B. Sullivan and Campbell.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the State Parks and Recreation Commission to permit small scale prospecting and mining in appropriate beach areas within the Seashore Conservation Area.
- Authorizes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to adopt rules in the Gold and Fish Pamphlet by December 31, 2007, for small scale prospecting and mining in the Seashore Conservation Area.

Hearing Date: 1/24/06

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

The Seashore Conservation Area (Seashore) was established in 1967, dedicating the public beaches on the Pacific Ocean to public recreation. The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) is authorized to oversee the Seashore under principles established in statute. Except for specific authorized purposes, lands within the Seashore may not be sold or leased.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) manages fish and wildlife populations to preserve species and provide recreational and commercial fishing and hunting opportunities. Within the Seashore, the WDFW is specifically authorized to regulate the conservation or taking of fish and shellfish.

Under the hydraulic code, the WDFW must develop rules for small scale prospecting and mining without requiring a hydraulic permit. Small scale prospecting and mining means the use of pans, nonmotorized sluice boxes, concentrators, and minirocker boxes for the discovery and recovery of minerals. The rules, published in the Gold and Fish Pamphlet, describe allowable small scale prospecting and mining activities and activities that would require a hydraulic permit.

Summary of Bill:

The Commission must permit small scale prospecting and mining in appropriate beach areas within the Seashore.

The WDFW is specifically authorized to regulate small scale prospecting and mining within the Seashore. The WDFW must adopt rules in the Gold and Fish Pamphlet by December 31, 2007, for small scale prospecting and mining in the Seashore.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/17/06.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.