
**Natural Resources, Ecology &
Parks Committee**

SSB 5895

Brief Description: Increasing coordination between the Puget Sound recovery partnership and other governmental entities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Water, Energy & Environment (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Poulsen, Morton, Regala, Pridemore, Jacobsen and Kohl-Welles).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Renames and restructures the Puget Sound Water Quality Action team.
- Adds members to the Puget Sound Council.
- Creates a new grant program.

Hearing Date: 3/24/05

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Puget Sound Action Team (Action Team) was created in 1996 to develop a biennial work plan and budget, coordinate research and monitoring efforts, update the Puget Sound management plan, and coordinate the efforts of governmental entities.

The Action Team has 14 members, including a chair appointed by the Governor, representatives of 10 state agencies, and one representative each for cities, counties, and tribes. Three federal agencies are represented as ex officio nonvoting members.

The Puget Sound Council (Council) was created as an advisory group to the PSAT. The Council makes recommendations regarding: priority projects and activities for inclusion in the biennial work plan; activities which the Action Team could coordinate; and proposed amendments to the Puget Sound management plan. The Council is composed of 11 members. Seven of the members are citizens representing agriculture, business, the environmental community, the shellfish industry, cities, counties, and tribal governments. A representative of each caucus of the House of Representatives and Senate serve as nonvoting members.

Summary of Bill:

The Action team is renamed and restructured with the goal of enhancing coordination and integration of the planning, budgeting, and program activities of the entities that have responsibility for the management of Puget Sound. The Legislature finds that the scale of the work done in the past to protect and restore the Puget Sound is not commensurate with the scale of the challenges needed for long-term viability.

The new Puget Sound Recovery Partnership

The Action Team's new name is the Puget Sound Recovery Partnership (Partnership). The partnership will become an independent state agency, and not a part of the Governor's Office. The Partnership will be composed of 15 individuals. In addition to the directors of the departments of Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Community, Trade, and Economic Development, the Partnership will be served by the administrative officer of the Conservation Commission, two representatives of cities, one person representing special purpose governments, two people representing counties, two tribal representatives, and the executive director of the Partnership's staff, which will continue to be known as the "Action Team".

In addition to the 15 voting members of the Partnership, the administrative head of the Department of Transportation, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and Puget Sound Council, and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation will serve as non-voting members. Additional non-voting members can be invited to participate, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the director of the Northwest Straits Commission, and the chair of the Puget Sound Shared Strategy.

Conservation and recovery agenda

The Partnership is charged with defining, coordinating, and implementing the state's conservation and recovery agenda for Puget Sound. This agenda is to be outlined in a recovery management plan adopted by the Partnership. The plan shall describe the problems and priority areas for actions that will maintain and enhance water quality, protect and restore habitat, and maintain Puget Sound's biological resources within a 15-year time frame.

The plan must:

- Identify the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local agencies that are needed to complete the goals of the plan;
- Coordinate existing planning and research efforts;
- Focus on long-term goals for protecting and enhancing Puget Sound;
- Delineate clear and quantifiable measures of success in priority areas;
- Assign responsibilities for action for involved entities;
- Demonstrate a feasibility pathway to success; and
- Include all related plans developed by other entities.

The plan must be updated and amended periodically. In addition, the Partnership must prepare a work plan and budget, coordinate initiatives among the member entities of the Partnership, produce biennial work plans with local governments, assist local government obtain grants, coordinate permitting requirements, promote public participation, appoint advisory committees as needed, and identify policy conflicts among member entities.

Puget Sound Council

The membership of the Puget Sound Council is increased from 11 to 13 members. The list of possible interests to be represented is changed to include conservation districts. In addition, the executive director of the Partnership's staff is added as a non-voting member.

The tasks of the Puget Sound Council is enlarged to include overseeing the implementation of the work plan elements that receive Legislative funding. The Council is also directed to monitor the progress of the Partnership member entities in implementing the work plan, and report on their progress to the Legislature.

Grant program

A grant program is created. The program will award competitive grants to provide public and private entities with funding for activities identified by the Puget Sound Council. Money for the program will come from legislative appropriation, and it is the intent of the bill for at least \$5 million to be provided each biennium. A source for funding is not identified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 3/18/05.

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