

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1462

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, March 24, 2005

Title: An act relating to funding conservation districts.

Brief Description: Funding conservation districts.

Sponsors: House Committee on Economic Development, Agriculture & Trade (originally sponsored by Representatives Linville, Buri, Pettigrew and Chase; by request of Conservation Commission).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/09/05, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 3/24/05 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Delvin, Jacobsen and Morton.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: The Conservation Commission (Commission) and 47 conservation districts administer a number of programs related to the conservation of natural resources. Under current law, the Commission is authorized to use legislatively-appropriated funds to make grants to conservation districts on the basis of formulas included in the law. Since the inception of the program in 1989, appropriations to the Commission have resulted in annual grants of approximately \$10,000 to each conservation district, which must be matched dollar for dollar.

Summary of Bill: The Conservation Commission is given authority to adopt rules concerning eligibility and distribution of grants to conservation districts. Existing statutory formulas governing distribution of grants to conservation districts are repealed. The Commission must submit a report to the Legislature on the distribution of grant funds to conservation districts by September 30, 2007.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For (on companion SB 5010): Historically, each conservation district has been given a set minimal amount of basic funding to keep their doors open. Some districts have

developed significant funding sources while others remain underfunded. The goal of this bill is to come up with a new allocation formula so that all districts have a chance to be viable. For this purpose, the Governor's budget request proposes an additional appropriation of \$210,000 for distribution to conservation districts and the additional appropriation is contingent upon the passage of this bill.

Testimony Against (on companion SB 5010): None.

Who Testified (on companion SB 5010): PRO: Mark Clark, Conservation Commission; John Larson and Jim Jesernig, Washington Association of Conservation Districts; and John Stuhlmiller, Washington Farm Bureau.