

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4029

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Brief Description: Requesting that Congress fund the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative.

Sponsors: Representatives Liias, Loomis, Ericks, Sells, Rolfes, Seaquist, McCoy, Upthegrove, Hunt, Williams, Linville, Appleton, Smith, Morrell, McIntire and Pearson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/4/08 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requests that the United States Congress continue to mandate and fund the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Van De Wege, Vice Chair; Kretz, Ranking Minority Member; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Eickmeyer, Grant, Kristiansen, Lantz, Loomis, McCoy, Nelson, Newhouse and Orcutt.

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

Background:

Congress authorized a study of the Northwest Straits region in the mid-1980s for potential inclusion in the National Marine Sanctuary system. In 1997 United States Senator Patty Murray and United States Representative Jack Metcalf established a blue-ribbon committee (known as the Murray-Metcalf Commission) to explore alternative models for protecting and restoring marine resources in the Northwest Straits. The Murray-Metcalf Commission agreed that the Northwest Straits marine ecosystem and its marine resources were in serious trouble, citing declining populations of bottomfish, sea birds, invertebrates, salmon, and some populations of marine mammals as prime examples. The Murray-Metcalf Commission

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published a report, known as the Report to the Convenors, which laid the groundwork for what was to become the Northwest Straits Initiative. The result is the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NSMCI), authorized by Congress in 1998.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature respectfully requests that Congress continue to mandate and fund the NSMCI in order to protect, preserve, and restore environmental health to Puget Sound.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill will bring further recognition and acknowledgement for this important Initiative. The NSMCI does incredible on-the-ground projects that are truly helping Puget Sound.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Liias, prime sponsor; and Tom Clingman, Washington Department of Ecology.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.