

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6204

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to water resource inventory area 14.

Brief Description: Dividing water resource inventory area 14 into WRIA 14a and WRIA 14b.

Sponsors: Senator Sheldon.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/25/08, 2/27/08 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Divides water resource inventory area 14 into two segments, distinguished by whether the water drains into the Hood Canal or Puget Sound.

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: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

Watershed Planning

The Watershed Planning Act establishes a process through which local groups can develop and implement plans for managing and protecting local water resources and rights. The local groups authorized to develop watershed plans are organized by water resource inventory areas (WRIAs). A WRIA is, generally speaking, an area determined to be a distinct watershed.

There are over 60 WRIAs identified by the Department of Ecology (Department). Each WRIA is identified by a number and may contain a local watershed planning group with an identified

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lead entity. The WRIsAs 40 and 29, which are both located in central Washington, are unique in that the Legislature specially bifurcated the watersheds into two distinct WRIsAs and authorized separate planning processes.

Once constituted, a WRIA is eligible for grant funding from the Department. There are funding opportunities available for both planning and implementation.

All WRIsAs are not in the same stage of development. Some WRIsAs are implementing their plans, while others have yet to have a local watershed group form. In between, there are WRIsAs that have an approved plan awaiting implementation, WRIsAs still developing the local plan, WRIsAs where the planning process has been terminated, and WRIsAs with developed plans awaiting county approval.

WRIA 14

The WRIA 14 is the Kennedy-Goldsborough watershed and is located in Mason and Thurston counties. The WRIA surrounds the City of Shelton and drains into both the Hood Canal and the furthest extremes of southern Puget Sound. The lead agency for the WRIA 14 watershed group is the Mason County Department of Community Development, and the initiating governments are Mason County, a local public utility district, the City of Shelton, Thurston County, and the Squaxin Island Indian Tribe.

The local watershed group completed a draft plan in 2006; however, the unanimous consensus of the initiating governments was not reached and the planning process was terminated. Prior to the termination, the WRIA 14 group had received \$770,000 in grants from the Department.

Summary of Bill:

The WRIA 14 is divided into two separate areas. Those portions of WRIA 14 draining into the Hood Canal are designated as WRIA 14b, and other portions of WRIA 14 are designated WRIA 14a. Both WRIA 14a and 14b each are scheduled to receive one half of the planning money reserved for a single WRIA.

Planning responsibilities for WRIA 14b is transferred to the WRIA 16 planning unit, which is located just to the north of WRIA 14 in the Skokomish-Dosewallips watershed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (In support) This is a simple, straightforward bill that advances watershed planning in the Hood Canal.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Shelton, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.