

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 6227

As Passed Senate, February 18, 2008

Title: An act relating to strengthening Washington's outer coast marine resources committees.

Brief Description: Providing support and resources to outer coast marine resources committees.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator Jacobsen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/31/08, 2/06/08 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/11/08, 2/12/08 [DP2S].
Passed Senate: 2/18/08, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6227 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Hatfield, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Rockefeller, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6227 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Hatfield, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Elise Greef (786-7708)

Background: Congress created the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (Conservation Initiative) in 1998 as a conservation and restoration program serving the northwest portion of Puget Sound. The Conservation Initiative is charged with establishing community-based marine stewardship, conducting citizen-driven scientific studies on marine species and their habitat, and restoring marine habitat.

The Conservation Initiative has established seven Marine Resource Committees (MRCs), one

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for each of the following counties: Clallam, Island, Jefferson, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom. Each of these MRCs are citizen-based, with representatives from local government, tribal government, and the scientific, economic, recreational, and conservation communities.

In 2007 the Legislature authorized all outer coast counties to establish MRCs for their coastal areas, along with certain Puget Sound counties. The statutory purpose of state MRCs is to address, utilizing sound science, the needs of the marine ecosystem local to the county initiating the MRC. County legislative authorities may create MRCs, and citizens may also petition the county to create an MRC.

State MRC membership must reflect balanced representation from local governments, scientific experts, economic interests, recreational interests, environmental interests, and tribal representation. Generally, county legislative authorities determine MRC membership.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is the coordinating entity for outer coast MRCs.

Salmon recovery lead entities are local, watershed-based organizations that prioritize and submit to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board habitat protection and restoration projects for funding consideration.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: The outer coast marine resource committee program (program) is created to support outer coast MRCs. As director of the program, DFW must: (1) provide each outer coast MRC with a coordinator to support the committee's work; and (2) distribute grants to outer coast MRCs to support projects that benefit coastal marine resources.

MRCs must annually report its activities and recommendations to the Governor and Legislature. Additionally, DFW must develop grant procedures and processes, which may include annual funding allocations for each MRC.

MRC membership must include representation from local residents. In lieu of creating a new entity to serve as an outer coast or Puget Sound MRC, a county legislative authority may designate a salmon recovery lead entity organization to also serve as the MRC. However, a county may only make this designation upon consent of the lead entity organization.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): PRO: Marine resources committees are effective at creating local collaboration and utilizing local expertise to get projects completed on the ground. This model also provides a flexible tool to allow counties to join, abstain, or utilize a committee in a way that fits their particular needs. As opposed to past efforts, the marine resources committee model is a ground up approach. This will also bring attention to outer coast issues, putting them on the front burner. The bill, however, should be amended to ensure the committees report its activities to the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Governor, and the Legislature.

Persons Testifying (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): PRO: Tim Smith, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Ginny Broadhurst, Northwest Straits Commission; Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy; Douglas Fricke, Washington Trollers Assn.; Al Carter, Grays Harbor County; Bill Garvin, Washington Association of Counties; Ray Toste, Washington Dungeness Crab Fishers Assn.; Jody Kennedy, Surfrider Foundation.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): None.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.