

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6385

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters, February 1, 2012

Title: An act relating to extending the habitat and recreation lands coordinating group until July 31, 2017.

Brief Description: Extending the tenure of the habitat and recreation lands coordinating group.

Sponsors: Senators Parlette, Fraser, Morton, Ranker and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters: 1/30/12, 2/01/12 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, NATURAL RESOURCES & MARINE WATERS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Ranker, Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove and Stevens.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Generally. The RCO administers a number of grant and policy programs relating to natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation. These programs include the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB); the Salmon Recovery Funding Board; the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office; the Invasive Species Council; as well as the Habitat and Recreational Land Coordinating Group. The Director of RCO is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor. However, the Governor must select the director from among nominations submitted by the RCFB.

The Role of the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group (Lands Group). In 2007 the Legislature established the Lands Group consisting of:

- the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, which administratively houses and Lands Group and has since become the RCO;
- the State Parks and Recreation Commission;
- the Department of Natural Resources;
- the Department of Fish and Wildlife; and

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- representatives of appropriate stakeholder groups invited to participate by the Director of RCO.

The statutory duties of the Lands Group include:

- reviewing agency land acquisition and disposal plans to help ensure statewide coordination;
- producing a forecast of land acquisition and disposal plans;
- convening an annual forum for agencies to coordinate near term acquisition and disposal plans;
- developing recommendations for geographic information systems mapping and acquisition and disposal recordkeeping; and
- developing an approach for monitoring the success of acquisitions.

The Lands Group is set to expire July 31, 2012.

Summary of Bill: The bill extends the Lands Group through July 31, 2017. In addition, the bill:

- directs the Lands Group to prioritize specified activities if it does not have the resources to fulfill all of its statutory duties;
- directs the Lands Group, prior January 1, 2017, to make recommendations on whether it should be continued beyond July 31, 2017;
- modifies statute to recognize the name change of the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to the RCO; and
- directs natural resources land management agencies to participate in the Lands Group within existing resources.

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: PRO: The Lands Group originated out of concerns from local governments and the general public about public agency land acquisitions. The Land Group has served to both communicate information about agency land acquisition plans to the public and local governments as well as help the agencies coordinate their acquisition planning with each other. The Lands Group also serves as a forum for local governments, interest groups, and legislators to ask questions and provide input into the state agency land acquisition process.

OTHER: RCO provides staff support to the Lands Group, a central role of which is to make acquisitions and disposals more transparent. The Group supports continuing to play this role.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Parlette, prime sponsor; Tom Bugert, WA Wildlife and Recreation Coalition; Bill Clarke, Trust for Public Land; Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy.

OTHER: Kaleen Cottingham, Recreation and Conservation Office.