

---

SENATE BILL 6381

---

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By Senators Ranker and Rolfe

Read first time 01/23/14. Referred to Committee on Energy, Environment & Telecommunications.

1 AN ACT Relating to watershed councils in the Puget Sound basin; and  
2 creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that watershed  
5 councils are a vital component of the region's efforts to restore and  
6 protect the health of Puget Sound as well as the rivers flowing into  
7 Puget Sound. Watershed councils reflect local knowledge, expertise,  
8 and dedication to restoring and protecting their watersheds, while  
9 coordinating with other councils and tribal, national, state, and local  
10 agencies in the broader geographic context of recovering Puget Sound.  
11 Watershed councils are diverse in their representation, mission, and  
12 the history by which they were formed. They include salmon recovery  
13 lead entities formed under chapter 77.85 RCW, local integrating  
14 organizations formed under guidance from the Puget Sound partnership,  
15 watershed planning entities formed under chapter 90.82 RCW, other  
16 watershed councils formed by county governments, the Hood Canal  
17 coordinating council recognized as a recovery entity in chapter 90.88  
18 RCW, marine resources committees formed under chapter 36.125 RCW, and  
19 others.

1 The legislature further finds that authorizing statutes and  
2 subsequent council formation have occurred over the previous two  
3 decades in separate actions, and that it is vital that these important  
4 watershed-level efforts be coordinated to the maximum extent  
5 practicable within the regional framework of Puget Sound recovery  
6 strategies, and that any statutory barriers to this coordination be  
7 eliminated.

8 Therefore, it is the purpose of this act to direct the Puget Sound  
9 partnership to conduct a review of councils engaged in Puget Sound  
10 recovery work and provide recommendations for legislative actions to  
11 further strengthen the role of watershed councils in achieving a  
12 healthy Puget Sound.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Puget Sound partnership must conduct  
14 a review of the role of watershed councils in accomplishing the goals  
15 and objectives of Puget Sound recovery. In conducting the review, the  
16 partnership must conduct several meetings with representatives of the  
17 full spectrum of watershed councils, including those described in  
18 section 1 of this act. The partnership must also invite other Puget  
19 Sound stakeholder interests, as well as representatives of federal,  
20 tribal, state, and local government agencies engaged in Puget Sound  
21 recovery work.

22 (2) The Puget Sound partnership must structure the meetings to  
23 obtain the views and recommendations on issues such as:

24 (a) The most effective structure for watershed councils in relation  
25 to their specific mission;

26 (b) Ways to achieve greater coordination or integration when more  
27 than one council is working in the same geographic area;

28 (c) Ways to maximize the role and effectiveness of watershed  
29 councils in implementing restoration projects and programs that are  
30 prioritized within the Puget Sound action agenda; and

31 (d) Identifying statutory provisions that impede the effectiveness  
32 of councils.

33 (3) The Puget Sound partnership must compile a summary of the  
34 meetings. The summary, together with recommendations for legislative,  
35 budgetary, and administrative actions to strengthen the role of  
36 watershed councils in Puget Sound recovery, must be provided to the

1 appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the senate and house of  
2 representatives by January 1, 2015.

--- END ---