

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2493

As Reported by House Committee On: Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to extending the expiration date of the habitat and recreation lands coordinating group.

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

Sponsors: Representatives Smith and Tharinger; by request of Recreation and Conservation Office.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 1/20/16, 1/27/16 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the expiration date of the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group from July 31, 2017, to July 31, 2027.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Walkinshaw, Vice Chair; Buys, Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Hurst, Kretz, Lytton, Orcutt, Pettigrew, Schmick, Stanford and Van De Wege.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group (Lands Group) is a statutorily created work group assigned with the task of annually reporting to the Office of Financial Management on issues relating to state habitat and recreation land purchases and disposals.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Lands Group is required to include the participation of staff from the various state agencies involved on some level with public land acquisition and management. In addition, representatives of appropriate stakeholder groups may be invited to participate by the Director of the Recreational and Conservation Office. Currently the Lands Group has 16 members representing various state agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, industry trade groups, and legislative districts.

The Lands Group has been assigned specific statutory duties. These 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 was created in 2007 and set to expire in 2012. However, before the original expiration date arrived, the Legislature extended its existence until July 31, 2017. During the Land Group's 2012 renewal, the Legislature declared that state agency participation on the Lands Group must be funded within existing resources.

Summary of Bill:

The expiration date of the Lands Group is extended from July 31, 2017, to July 31, 2027.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) When the Lands Group was first created there were great concerns about how the state was acquiring land. There was little coordination among agencies and insufficient vision going forward. It was a situation where the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing. The Lands Group has helped address those problems and allows the various public entities to know what each are doing in terms of land acquisition. The Lands Group brings all interests together to talk about the state's vision and allows the state to know where it should slow down land acquisitions and where legacy investments should be made.

The Lands Group also produces valuable reports for the Legislature. These include a biennial state land acquisition forecast and a monitoring report that summarizes state purchases.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Smith, prime sponsor; and Kaleen Cottingham, Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.