

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5088

As Passed House:
April 8, 2015

Title: An act relating to geological hazards assessment.

Brief Description: Concerning a geological hazards assessment.

Sponsors: Senators Pearson, Hargrove, Honeyford, Parlette, Keiser, Liias, Hobbs, Hatfield, Kohl-Welles, Frockt, Dammeier, Rolfes, Hewitt, Dandel, Fraser, Chase and Conway; by request of Commissioner of Public Lands.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/11/15, 3/17/15 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/8/15, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the state Geological Survey (Survey) to apply the best practicable technology, including light detection and ranging (Lidar) mapping, while performing its existing obligation to identify and map volcanic, seismic, landslide, and tsunami hazards.
- Requires the state Survey to acquire new data and coordinate with, compile, and share data with state and local governments, and to create and maintain a publicly available database of Lidar and geological hazard maps and geotechnical reports.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

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

Staff: Peter Clodfelter (786-7127).

Background:

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 Department of Natural Resources (DNR), through the appointed State Geologist, is responsible for maintaining the state Geological Survey (Survey). The Survey is required to meet several objectives, including performing examinations of the state's mined products, the state's water resources, the state's soil classifications, and the occurrence of natural road building materials. The Survey must also produce geological and economic maps and information related to science and economics deemed of value by the State Geologist. Reports and maps generated from the Survey must be made available to the general public for purchase.

The Survey is instructed to conduct and maintain an assessment of the volcanic, seismic, landslide, and tsunami hazards in Washington. That assessment must include identification and mapping of hazards, as well as an estimation of the potential consequences and the likelihood of a geological hazard event.

Summary of Bill:

While performing its existing obligation of mapping volcanic, seismic, landslide, and tsunami hazards, the Survey is required to apply the best practicable technology, including light detection and ranging (Lidar) mapping. Further, the Survey is required to acquire new data, coordinate with state and local government agencies to compile and share data, and create and maintain a publicly available database of Lidar and geological hazard maps and geotechnical reports prepared while acquiring the new data.

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) The DNR supports this bill because the state is at significant risk of damage from geological hazards. Although current law requires the Survey to perform the geological hazards assessment, the bill would clarify the DNR's role in performing the geological hazards assessment. The bill emphasizes the importance of coordination between the DNR and local governments and state agencies, and of the public availability of data about the state's geological hazards. This bill is important for public safety.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Dave Norman, Department of Natural Resources.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.