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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1453**

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**State of Washington**

**64th Legislature**

**2015 Regular Session**

**By** House Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Pike, Wylie, Takko, and Vick)

READ FIRST TIME 02/20/15.

1       AN ACT Relating to eliminating the backlog of land use  
2 applications in the Columbia River Gorge commission for the purpose  
3 of protecting and enhancing the natural scenery and regional economic  
4 development of the Columbia River Gorge national scenic area;  
5 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

7       NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 1.**   (1) The legislature finds that congress  
8 established the Columbia River Gorge commission to protect and  
9 enhance both the natural scenery and the regional economic  
10 development of the Columbia River Gorge national scenic area in  
11 Washington and Oregon. The mission of the Columbia River Gorge  
12 commission is to establish policies that enhance the scenic,  
13 recreational, and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge, and  
14 to support the economy of the area by encouraging growth in existing  
15 urban areas and allowing economic development consistent with  
16 resource protection.

17       (2) Consistent with this mission, the legislature finds that the  
18 Columbia River Gorge national scenic area is experiencing significant  
19 economic growth in a number of areas. One example of this economic  
20 activity relates to the unmanned aerial vehicle industry that has  
21 created numerous jobs and partnerships and has the ability to attract

1 many related industries in the future. The development of these  
2 unmanned aerial vehicles is designed for a wide variety of beneficial  
3 uses with the utmost respect for privacy concerns.

4 (3) The legislature further finds that although economic growth  
5 has occurred in the Columbia River Gorge national scenic area, the  
6 Columbia River Gorge commission has experienced budget reductions in  
7 recent years and has a backlog of unprocessed land use applications.

8 (4) The legislature intends to provide the Columbia River Gorge  
9 commission with one-half of one full-time equivalent employee who has  
10 experience and demonstrated expertise related to land use planning in  
11 Washington and Oregon, to be appointed by the governor, for the  
12 purpose of eliminating the backlog, improving the land use  
13 application process, and enabling the Columbia River Gorge commission  
14 to manage new projects that strengthen the economy within the  
15 Columbia River Gorge region. It is the intent of the legislature that  
16 the one-half of one full-time equivalent employee will begin January  
17 1, 2017.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Columbia River Gorge commission  
19 shall eliminate the backlog of complete and unprocessed land use  
20 applications by July 1, 2017. In complying with this subsection, the  
21 Columbia River Gorge commission must:

22 (a) Plan and implement improvements to the land use application  
23 review process that will reduce the amount of time needed to process  
24 applications;

25 (b) Reinstate processing timelines for land use applications;

26 (c) Provide technical assistance to the land use application  
27 programs of Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania counties; and

28 (d) Review proposed amendments to the scenic area management  
29 plan.

30 (2) In accordance with RCW 43.01.036, the Columbia River Gorge  
31 commission must submit two reports each year to the appropriate  
32 committees of the legislature describing progress on the following:

33 (a) The number of new staff members hired and trained by the  
34 Columbia River Gorge commission to process applications;

35 (b) The number of applications processed, the date each  
36 application was submitted to the Columbia River Gorge commission, the  
37 type of land use requested by each application, the date each  
38 application was processed by the Columbia River Gorge commission, and  
39 the number of applications that remain unprocessed; and

1 (c) Land use application process improvements intended to prevent  
2 future backlogs of unprocessed applications.

3 (3) The reports required by this section are due every six  
4 months, beginning January 1, 2016, and ending July 1, 2017.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act expires July 1, 2018.

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