
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1660

Brief Description: Creating a demonstration project for preserving public infrastructure and agricultural lands in floodplains.

Sponsors: Representatives McDonald and Muri.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife, and Ecology to expedite the permitting of a demonstration project in Pierce County in order to show the effectiveness of various techniques to remove excessive accumulations of sediment and gravel from rivers.
- Directs Pierce County to consider various sediment management strategies and techniques.

Hearing Date: 2/1/17

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

In 2016 the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Pierce County issued a Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement related to a study undertaken to identify and evaluate alternatives to manage flood risk in the Puyallup River and its tributaries, including the Carbon River and the White River. The purpose of the study was to identify, evaluate, and recommend solutions to the identified flood risks in the Puyallup River basin. One of the problems identified by the study was that sedimentation had contributed to a decrease in channel capacity, which in turn resulted in increased flood risk.

Summary of Bill:

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 departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife, and Ecology must expedite the permitting of a demonstration project in Pierce County that tests the effectiveness of various sediment management techniques as applied to the following goals:

- restoration or enhancement of fish runs;
- protection of public infrastructure and recreational access; and
- monitoring to inform future projects.

The pilot project must include the following sediment management techniques:

- a person must be on hand during all occurrences of sediment or gravel removal to ensure that the removal follows established pilot project protocols and protects fish life;
- certain gravel and sediment removal techniques may be limited at times when fish runs are known to be in the river; and
- reasonable steps must be taken to reduce turbidity associated with sediment and gravel removal.

Pierce County must consider various sediment management strategies and techniques, including:

- reducing turbidity caused by year-round stream bank erosion;
- providing stable riverbanks that allow long-term growth of riparian vegetation; and
- developing management practices that reduce the quantity of gravel and sediment deposited into farm fields.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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