
SENATE BILL 5538

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Senators Hunt and Nobles

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1 AN ACT Relating to a comprehensive study of aerial imaging
2 technology uses for state agencies, special purpose districts, and
3 local and tribal governments; and creating new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that aerial imagery
6 is a critically important tool that has wide applications in making
7 governmental decisions in a variety of settings. For example: (1) The
8 Washington state military department uses aerial imagery for
9 emergency management; (2) the department of transportation uses
10 aerial imagery for constructing roads and tracking culvert
11 replacement and fish migration; (3) the department of ecology uses
12 aerial imagery to create a coastal atlas to monitor oil spills in the
13 ocean and changes to the Washington coastline; (4) agencies that
14 monitor growth management and zoning use aerial imagery to monitor
15 urban density and to designate and protect critical areas; (5) the
16 department of natural resources uses aerial imagery to monitor forest
17 health, riparian buffers, and timber harvest; (6) conservation
18 districts use aerial imagery to plan salmon restoration projects and
19 to assess fire and flood damage; (7) the Nisqually tribe is using
20 aerial imagery to monitor the rerouting of the Nisqually river due to
21 inadequate water passage under the Nisqually bridge; (8) local

1 emergency management agencies use aerial imagery for public safety
2 efforts; (9) county assessors use aerial imagery as an integral part
3 of their valuation activities; (10) school districts use aerial
4 imagery to develop school safety plans and to site future buildings;
5 (11) state universities use aerial imagery for promotional material
6 and research purposes; (12) the emergency management division could
7 use aerial imagery to locate damaged structures and bridges and track
8 emergency detours; and (13) state parks could use aerial imagery to
9 track structures on park land and for land management.

10 The legislature also finds that state, local, and tribal
11 governments that currently use aerial imaging data are purchasing it
12 independently, often resulting in multiple payments for the same data
13 to be collected. The legislature intends to commission a study to
14 assess a more cost-effective way to purchase cutting-edge aerial
15 imagery at the state level, which would allow individual
16 jurisdictions that seek aerial imagery to purchase such data from the
17 state. The legislature also intends to identify the myriad uses for
18 which state agencies, special purpose districts, and local and tribal
19 governments could benefit from having aerial imaging data to conduct
20 everyday business, protect property, assist citizens, conduct
21 emergency planning, and respond to disasters.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts
23 appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of commerce
24 shall conduct a study for the use of aerial imaging technology for
25 state, local, special purpose district, and tribal government
26 purposes.

27 (2) The study conducted by the department of commerce must, at a
28 minimum:

29 (a) Include an assessment of:

30 (i) The ways in which state agencies, local governments, special
31 purpose districts, and tribal governments currently use aerial
32 imaging technology;

33 (ii) The ways in which state agencies, local governments, special
34 purpose districts, and tribal governments could benefit from having
35 access to aerial imaging technology, as determined by interviewing a
36 sample of state, local, special purpose district, and tribal
37 government officials to assess expectations for aerial imaging data;

38 (iii) The types of imagery currently used or needed; and

1 (iv) The frequency with which various types of imagery are
2 currently used or needed;

3 (b) Determine the minimum resolution level of aerial imaging that
4 would best serve the majority of users statewide;

5 (c) Estimate the current statewide expenditures by state, local,
6 and tribal governments, and special purpose districts, for aerial
7 image acquisition and organization;

8 (d) Estimate the cost of procuring, once per biennium, and
9 administering a high-quality aerial imagery program on a statewide
10 basis;

11 (e) Quantify the economies of scale between individual flights
12 procured by individual jurisdictions as compared to the cost of
13 procuring a single flight to obtain aerial imaging of the entire
14 state;

15 (f) Determine the best available mechanism for cost sharing
16 between jurisdictions for the acquisition and management of aerial
17 imagery;

18 (g) Evaluate which organization would be the most effective to
19 act as a central repository for shared imagery, including providing a
20 secured means to share between public bodies; and

21 (h) Make recommendations about current sources that provide
22 imaging data, further steps to improve the collection of aerial
23 imaging data, and the steps necessary to implement a comprehensive,
24 cost-efficient, aerial imaging collection and distribution system to
25 serve state, local, special purpose district, and tribal officials
26 statewide.

27 (3) In conducting the study pursuant to this section, the
28 department of commerce must convene and define the scope of the study
29 and assist in the design of information collection.

30 (4) In implementing this section, the department of commerce may
31 complete the study directly or, at its discretion, contract the
32 study, or portions of the study, to a third party or parties chosen
33 by the department of commerce. However, the final delivered product
34 must be reported by the department of commerce.

35 (5) Consistent with RCW 43.01.036, the study required by this
36 section must be completed and the results reported to the legislature
37 by June 1, 2023.

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