
**Agriculture and Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2341

Brief Description: Directing the University of Washington to conduct a study on the cumulative effects of offshore wind development on the oceanographic processes of the Pacific Ocean.

Sponsors: Representatives Springer, Chapman, Morgan, Stokesbary, Timmons and Ramel.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the University of Washington School of Oceanography to conduct a comprehensive scientific study on the cumulative effects of offshore wind development on oceanographic processes.

Hearing Date: 1/19/24

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

University of Washington School of Oceanography.

The University of Washington (UW) School of Oceanography works to advance the ocean sciences, find solutions to problems of societal relevance, and raise public awareness of the marine environment. The UW School of Oceanography works to create knowledge and understanding about the ocean through observation, theory, modeling, and technological innovation. The UW School of Oceanography has approximately 60 graduate students in residence working within four areas of specialization: biological, chemical, physical, and marine geology and geophysics, and on a variety of interdisciplinary topics, such as: climate change, extreme environments, and coastal systems. The UW was the first institution to offer bachelors degrees in oceanography, beginning in 1955.

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Summary of Bill:

The University of Washington (UW) School of Oceanography must conduct a comprehensive scientific study on the cumulative effects, both positive and negative, of offshore wind development on oceanographic processes such as tides, waves, and currents; and, in turn, how changes in those processes could affect the broader marine ecosystem.

The topics that the UW must address in the study include, but are not limited to:

- the impact that full projected build-out of offshore wind generation along the western coast of the United States is likely to have on ocean upwelling;
- the capacity for offshore wind turbines to both attract and repel fish and marine life; and
- the physical effects associated with wind turbine construction and operation, including water cloudiness, noise, vibrations, and disruptions to electromagnetic fields.

The UW must submit a copy of its study to the Office of the Governor and to the committees of the Legislature with jurisdiction over energy and fishing by June 30, 2026.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2024.

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