

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5894

As Passed Senate, March 15, 1994

Title: An act relating to wetlands owned by the department of transportation.

Brief Description: Planning for department of transportation wetlands.

Sponsors: Senators Prentice, Owen, Haugen, Wood, Kohl, Fairley, Sellar, Rasmussen, Oke, Schow and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/22/95, 2/23/95 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/15/95, 42-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Owen, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; Fairley, Morton, Oke, Prentice, Prince, Rasmussen, Schow, Sellar and Wood.

Staff: Robin Rettew (786-7306)

Background: A number of recommendations were made in the 1994 "Environmental Cost Savings and Permit Coordination Study" related to wetlands. One finding was that the Department of Transportation is not prepared to assume the land management responsibilities related to the long-term monitoring and maintenance of wetlands. Another was the recommendation that wetlands be mitigated on a watershed basis and wetland banks be utilized.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Transportation is required to develop a strategic plan for the long-term monitoring and maintenance of wetlands owned by the department. The plan must consider an evaluation of: (1) the costs for monitoring and maintaining wetlands; (2) the feasibility of developing wetland banks; (3) the feasibility of selling, contracting, or transferring title of department owned wetlands to other public agencies or nonprofit environmental corporations; (4) the barriers prohibiting mitigation of wetlands on a regional or watershed basis; and (5) how wetland habitat can be valued and quantified and how mitigation credits could be developed.

The department reports to the House and Senate Transportation Committees no later than January 15, 1997.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The Department of Transportation is incurring greater costs each year for maintaining and monitoring wetlands. There is a need to evaluate the long-term costs associated with maintaining and monitoring wetlands and for looking at opportunities for transferring ownership to other public agencies or environmental public corporations.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jerry Alb, WSDOT (pro); Carol Jolly, Department of Ecology (pro).