

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6172

As of Third Reading

Title: An act relating to oil spill advisory council.

Brief Description: Suspending the powers and duties of the oil spill advisory council for the 2009-2011 biennium.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Rockefeller and Ranker).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 4/18/09 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6172 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Tom, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Carrell, Fairley, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller and Schoesler.

Staff: Maria Hovde (786-7710)

Background: In 2005 the Oil Spill Advisory Council (Council) was created in the Office of the Governor to maintain the state's vigilance in the prevention of oil spills, while improving preparedness and response. The Council also serves as an advisory body on, and provides for stakeholder and public consideration of, matters relating to international, national, and regional oil spill issues.

The Council is composed of 16 members appointed by the Governor, plus two invited tribal representatives. Members are appointed representing the following interests: environmental communities, commercial shellfish industries, other commercial fisheries, marine recreation, tourism, county governments, marine trade, marine labor, major oil facilities, public ports, and individuals who reside on a shoreline. Appointments to the council must reflect a geographical balance and the diversity of populations within the areas potentially affected by oil spills in state waters. All members serve a four-year term.

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.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The activities of the Council are suspended for the 2009-11 biennium.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on June 30, 2009.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Council gives local governments and others a meaningful voice in oil spill response. To eliminate the Council entirely would no longer allow these specific groups to play a meaningful role in the oil spill response discussion. The Council has been a productive group that most recently brought to light the fact that the state is currently unprepared for a major spill.

CON: The underlying bill should be considered. The funds currently spent on operating the Council would be better spent on clean-up activities. Transferring the duties of the Council to the Puget Sound Partnership is appropriate because the Puget Sound Partnership is uniquely qualified to perform this function. They are able to work cooperatively with the Department of Ecology, the U.S. Coast Guard, and others to preserve and protect Puget Sound and they already have the capacity to take on these duties. We are hopeful that placing these duties within the Puget Sound Partnership will allow the state to continue to realize savings while elevating the policy discussion about how best to protect our marine resources.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Bruce Wishart, People for Puget Sound.

CON: Johann Hellman, Washington Public Ports Association; Julie Murray, Office of Financial Management.