



Legislation Text

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Clerk 03/29/2005

A MOTION urging support by the state legislature for measures to preserve and restore the ecological viability of major regional inland marine water bodies.

WHEREAS, the crown jewels of the regional environmental landscape are the inland marine waterways of the northwest, including Hood canal, Puget Sound and the northwest straits, around which the regional culture and ethic is built, and

WHEREAS, these marine waterways have been generous in providing sustenance resources and a treasured lifestyle to all in the region, featuring recreation, fishing, visual and spiritual amenities, shellfish harvesting, proximity to marine mammals and links with ancient cultures, and

WHEREAS, these inland waterways have provided a home for a unique range of creatures of the water and near shore for many centuries, and as recent arrivals to the region, we acknowledge our responsibility for custodianship and care, and

WHEREAS, continuing residential, commercial and industrial growth and development of the region have placed the choices before us for restoration or decline of these resources in sharp relief, and

WHEREAS, many citizen volunteers continue to be inspired by these waters to give countless hours in efforts to restore and protect them, with projects such as water quality monitoring, near shore assessment, habitat restoration and dissolved oxygen sampling, and

WHEREAS, in partnership with these volunteers, local and state governments must acknowledge and respond to these efforts by contributing to the restoration through available policy and budget means, and

WHEREAS, Hood canal is experiencing severe problems of low dissolved oxygen, which limits the

viability of that body as a diverse marine habitat, and

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of acres of shellfish beds are closed on Puget Sound, and high levels of toxic chemicals can be found in the livers and fat of some Puget Sound fish and marine mammals, and

WHEREAS, critical contributors to these water quality problems are thought to be stormwater runoff, toxic and automotive chemicals, leaking septic systems, pesticides and animal waste, and

WHEREAS, lessons of neglect and mismanagement of water resources locally and nationally point not only to the potential decline of cherished waterbodies in the absence of active custodianship but also to the ability of focused, coordinated efforts to revive and restore such waterbodies such as to make them viable as diverse, healthy regional resources again, and

WHEREAS, recent efforts to respond to endangered fisheries have illustrated the importance of coordinated support from the complex web of involved governments, tribes, environmental and business interests, fisheries concerns, development interests and the general public, in fashioning an effective, workable response, and

WHEREAS, Sound Solutions, a legislative package intended to address the key issues related to restoration of our inland waterways is currently before the legislature;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The council supports the Sound Solutions legislative package, and urges action by the state legislature in the following areas:

- A. Improvement of the management of septic systems, with particular emphasis placed on strengthening programs in areas of special concern such as Hood canal and in shellfish protection districts;
- B. Provision of better guidance to protect water quality through the Growth Management Act and other tools, and strengthening of incentives to landowners to manage shorelines in ways that protect water quality; and
- C. Making new investments to prevent water pollution including support to cities

and counties to pay for clean water projects, such as community septic systems, and to implement new safeguards, such as stormwater programs.