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HOUSE BILL 2300

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State of Washington                      65th Legislature                      2017 3rd Special Session

By Representatives Blake and J. Walsh

Prefiled 12/18/17.

1            AN ACT Relating to creating a legislative task force to provide  
2 economic relief for communities impacted by environmental protections  
3 of the marbled murrelet; creating new sections; and providing an  
4 expiration date.

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

6            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.**    The marbled murrelet, scientific name  
7 *Brachyramphus marmoratus*, is a protected species that resides along  
8 the west coast of North America with a population in Washington state  
9 that is greater than when it was listed under the federal endangered  
10 species act in 1992, but is reported to be in decline in recent  
11 years. The state has increased its environmental protections for the  
12 marbled murrelet and the department of natural resources is in the  
13 process of updating the 1997 state trust lands habitat conservation  
14 plan. Impacted communities are asking for better governance that will  
15 facilitate economic growth in areas subject to additional  
16 governmental environmental restrictions. The legislature intends to  
17 convene a task force of community and government leaders to review  
18 the current situation and make recommendations for improvement.

19            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    (1)(a) A legislative task force on the  
20 impacts of the protection of the marbled murrelet, to be known as the

1 habitat conservation program damage response task force, is  
2 established, with members as provided in this subsection.

3 (b) The task force is comprised of:

4 (i) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the  
5 senate as appointed by the minority and majority leaders of the  
6 senate and one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the  
7 house of representatives as appointed by the speaker of the house of  
8 representatives;

9 (ii) The governor, or a designated employee;

10 (iii) The commissioner of public lands, or a designated employee;

11 (iv) A representative of the department of fish and wildlife, as  
12 designated by the director;

13 (v) A representative of the United States fish and wildlife  
14 service with knowledge about the marbled murrelet or its regulation,  
15 if the department chooses to participate;

16 (vi) A representative of the department of commerce, as  
17 designated by the director;

18 (vii) One county commissioner from each county of the area  
19 impacted, to be selected by each county commission;

20 (viii) A representative of an association representing farms and  
21 forests;

22 (ix) A representative of an association representing a statewide  
23 association to protect forests;

24 (x) A representative of an organization representing businesses  
25 reliant on tourism;

26 (xi) At least one representative of a port located in each county  
27 of the area impacted;

28 (xii) A representative of entities involved in commercial  
29 fisheries in the area impacted;

30 (xiii) A representative of a chamber of commerce in each county  
31 of the area impacted; and

32 (xiv) A representative of the Indian tribe that resides along the  
33 shores of Willapa Bay designated by the tribal council, if the tribe  
34 chooses to participate.

35 (c) For the purposes of this subsection "area impacted" means  
36 each of the counties bordering the Pacific Ocean and Columbia river  
37 that have areas designated as protected habitat by the United States  
38 or Washington state for the marbled murrelet.

39 (2) The sponsor of this act shall convene the initial meeting of  
40 the task force by August 1, 2018, and shall serve as cochair. The

1 senate cochair must be appointed by the majority leader of the  
2 senate. The cochairs shall invite individuals to serve as  
3 nonlegislative and nonexecutive representatives on the task force.

4 (3) The task force shall review and take testimony on the  
5 following issues:

6 (a) The economic impacts associated with environmental protection  
7 of the marbled murrelets in counties bordering the Pacific Ocean;

8 (b) The barriers to development in areas subject to marbled  
9 murrelets environmental protections;

10 (c) The property tax burden shift caused by the devaluation of  
11 land due to environmental protections of the marbled murrelets;

12 (d) Identify activities that could improve the economic vitality  
13 of the impacted areas; and

14 (e) Any other issues related to improved prosperity and  
15 government regulations connected to marbled murrelets.

16 (4) The task force shall identify potential state actions to  
17 improve the economic vitality in counties impacted by the presence of  
18 marbled murrelets and recommend any changes to state policy,  
19 government rules, or statutes in a report to the appropriate  
20 committees of the legislature by December 1, 2018. The report should  
21 identify which recommendations are supported by a majority of voting  
22 members of the task force. Nonvoting members include representatives  
23 designated in subsection (1)(b)(ii) through (vi) of this section.

24 (5) The task force may provide information and economic  
25 evaluations to the federal government as part of the process of the  
26 update to the 1997 state trust lands habitat conservation plan.

27 (6) Staff support for the task force must be provided by senate  
28 committee services, house of representative office of program  
29 research, and state agency members of the task force. The task force  
30 may consult with additional persons who have specific technical  
31 expertise if such expertise is necessary to carry out the duties of  
32 the task force.

33 (7) Legislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed for  
34 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative  
35 members, except those representing an employer or organization, are  
36 entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW  
37 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

38 (8) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the  
39 senate and the house of representatives.

1 (9) This section expires July 1, 2019.

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