

RCW 36.61.010 Findings—Intent—Purpose. (1) The legislature finds that the environmental, recreational, and aesthetic values of many of the state's lakes are threatened by eutrophication and other deterioration and that existing governmental authorities are unable to adequately improve and maintain the quality of the state's lakes.

(2) The legislature intends that an ecosystem-based beach management approach should be used to help promote the health of aquatic ecosystems and that such a management approach be undertaken in a manner that retains ecosystem values within the state. This management approach should use long-term strategies that focus on reducing nutrient inputs from human activities affecting the aquatic ecosystem, such as decreasing nutrients into stormwater sewers, decreasing fertilizer application, promoting the proper disposal of pet waste, promoting the use of vegetative borders, promoting the reduction of nutrients from on-site septic systems where appropriate, and protecting riparian areas. Organic debris, including vegetation, driftwood, seaweed, kelp, and organisms, are extremely important to beach ecosystems.

(3) The legislature further finds that it is in the public interest to promote the conservation and stewardship of shorelines and upland properties adjoining lakes and beaches in order to: (a) Conserve natural or scenic resources; (b) protect riparian habitats and water quality; (c) promote conservation of soils, wetlands, shorelines, or tidal marshes; (d) enhance the value of lakes or beaches to the public as well as the benefit of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations or sanctuaries, or other open space; (e) enhance recreation opportunities; (f) preserve historic sites; and (g) protect visual quality along highway, road, street, trail, recreational, and other corridors or scenic vistas.

(4) It is the purpose of this chapter to establish a governmental mechanism by which property owners can embark on a program of lake or beach improvement and maintenance for their and the general public's benefit, health, and welfare. Public property, including state property, shall be considered the same as private property in this chapter, except liens for special assessments and liens for rates and charges shall not extend to public property. Lake bottom property and marine property below the line of the ordinary high water mark shall not be considered to be benefited, shall not be subject to special assessments or rates and charges, and shall not receive voting rights under this chapter. [2014 c 85 § 1; 2008 c 301 § 1; 1987 c 432 § 1; 1985 c 398 § 1.]