

RCW 90.71.200 Findings—Intent. (1) The legislature finds that:

(a) Puget Sound, including Hood Canal, and the waters that flow to it are a national treasure and a unique resource. Residents enjoy a way of life centered around these waters that depends upon clean and healthy marine and freshwater resources.

(b) Puget Sound is in serious decline, and Hood Canal is in a serious crisis. This decline is indicated by loss of and damage to critical habitat, rapid decline in species populations, increases in aquatic nuisance species, numerous toxics contaminated sites, urbanization and attendant stormwater drainage, closure of beaches to shellfish harvest due to disease risks, low-dissolved oxygen levels causing death of marine life, and other phenomena. If left unchecked, these conditions will worsen.

(c) Puget Sound must be restored and protected in a more coherent and effective manner. The current system is highly fragmented. Immediate and concerted action is necessary by all levels of government working with the public, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to ensure a thriving natural system that exists in harmony with a vibrant economy.

(d) Leadership, accountability, government transparency, thoughtful and responsible spending of public funds, and public involvement will be integral to the success of efforts to restore and protect Puget Sound.

(2) The legislature therefore creates a new Puget Sound partnership to coordinate and lead the effort to restore and protect Puget Sound, and intends that all governmental entities, including federal and state agencies, tribes, cities, counties, ports, and special purpose districts, support and help implement the partnership's restoration efforts. The legislature further intends that the partnership will:

(a) Define a strategic action agenda prioritizing necessary actions, both basin-wide and within specific areas, and creating an approach that addresses all of the complex connections among the land, water, web of species, and human needs. The action agenda will be based on science and include clear, measurable goals for the recovery of Puget Sound by 2020;

(b) Determine accountability for performance, oversee the efficiency and effectiveness of money spent, educate and engage the public, and track and report results to the legislature, the governor, and the public;

(c) Not have regulatory authority, nor authority to transfer the responsibility for, or implementation of, any state regulatory program, unless otherwise specifically authorized by the legislature.

(3) It is the goal of the state that the health of Puget Sound be restored by 2020. [2007 c 341 s 1.]