

The objective of Senate Bill 5486/ House Bill 1635 is to direct the State to create a comprehensive strategy for lakes protection and restoration, which will recommend further legislative authorization and funding to achieve a comprehensive statewide lakes protection and restoration program.

- Lakes are priceless resources; they are extensively used for recreation, provide unique wildlife habitat, protect water quality, and provide drinking water, in addition to generating extra property tax income. They provide these benefits within some of the most urbanized areas of our State, yet we have no program for their management or protection.
- Multiple agencies, with diverse and sometimes opposing management objectives, set policies that affect lakes, yet none have an active interest in this resource or are proponents for them. This means that State residents have no place to turn for help or direction, and that this valuable resource is largely neglected or managed by default.
- The lack of a Statewide, coordinated program has resulted in an issue-driven, lake-by-lake management approach that is ineffective, divisive, and expensive.
- For more than a decade there has been little or no emphasis or directed funding to manage the State's lakes, either from the State or Federal level. Many lakes continue to suffer from watershed and in-lake sources of contaminants. Yet, there is limited recognition of their value or procedure for restoring their quality." In the past 10 years, while Washington has lost even a vestige of a State lake program, the range and importance of lake issues has expanded; toxic algae blooms, invasive species, climate change impacts and biodiversity have joined excessive nutrients and nuisance levels of plants and algae as serious threats to lakes. These issues can not be solved on a lake-by-lake basis.
- Washington State needs a comprehensive and coordinated statewide program to identify and address lake issues, set legislative and research priorities, and support local lake protection efforts.
- We are asking for funding that will support a joint effort by citizens, scientists and public agencies to develop the framework for a coordinated Statewide program.