

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2560

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Environmental Affairs*

Title: An act relating to senior environmental corps.

Brief Description: Establishing the senior environmental corps.

Sponsor(s): Representatives J. Kohl, Horn, Rust, Basich, Rayburn, Ogden, Kremen, Valle, Paris, Pruitt, Jacobsen, Haugen, Belcher, Rasmussen, Fraser and Anderson; by request of Department of Community Development.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Environmental Affairs, January 31, 1992, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives Rust, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Horn, Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Brekke; G. Fisher; J. Kohl; Neher; Pruitt; and Van Luven.

Staff: Harry Reinert (786-7110).

Background: Governor Gardner included in his 1988 State of the State speech a recommendation that the state establish a senior environmental corps to tap the expertise of professional and para-professional seniors to volunteer in environmental and natural resource programs. Since his announcement, seven state agencies have established programs to use senior volunteers. According to figures provided by the Department of Community Development, at least 175 seniors have participated in the program by giving over 14,000 hours of their time.

Congress has passed legislation which includes grants to state and local governments which have established volunteer programs.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Senior Environmental Corps is established within the Department of Community

Development (DCD). The goals of the corps are: to carry out projects that focus on natural, environmental, and recreational resources; to provide opportunities for seniors to use their professional expertise; to assist state agencies in carrying out statutory responsibilities; and to provide public outreach and education.

A Senior Environmental Corps coordinating council is created to oversee operation of the corps. The council's duties include evaluation and selection of projects for senior volunteer participation. Nine natural resource, environmental, health, and recreational agencies are members of the council. Contingent upon funding, DCD will provide staff support and budget oversight of the corps. Volunteers cannot be used to displace currently employed workers.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill includes the Department of Natural Resources as a participant in the Senior Environmental Corps.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 24, 1992.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: Since the Senior Environmental Corps was informally established, seniors have provided thousands of hours of time and expertise. In a time of declining resources, this is an excellent way to stretch state dollars and assist agencies in meeting their statutory duties. Formalizing the corps may increase the chances for obtaining a federal grant for the program.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Connie Bacon, Department of Community Development (pro); Steve Sherlock, Department of Wildlife (pro); George F. Tyler (pro); Linda Bradford, Department of Ecology (pro); Bill Brookreson, Department of Agriculture (pro); Randy McIntosh, Department of Fisheries (pro); Pamela Jane Morgan, Department of Ecology (pro); Chris Hedrick, Puget Sound Water Quality Authority (pro); Joan Hauser-Crowe, Washington State Parks (pro); Joan Weeks, Washington State Parks (pro); Dan Nguyen, Washington State Parks (pro); and Vern Leidle, Senior Environmental Corps (pro).