

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1196

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES, APRIL 5, 1991

Brief Description: Establishing the Washington state center for environmental and molecular sciences at Washington State University/Tri-Cities.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Energy & Utilities (originally sponsored by Representatives Bray, Neher, Jacobsen, Ludwig, Grant, Nealey, Rayburn, Inslee and G. Fisher).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Thorsness, Chairman; Saling, Vice Chairman; Jesernig, Nelson, Patterson, Roach, Stratton, Sutherland, and Williams.

Staff: Phil Moeller (786-7445)

Hearing Dates: April 4, 1991; April 5, 1991

BACKGROUND:

For the last few years, several of Washington's universities worked collaboratively to meet the upper-division and graduate education needs of the citizens in the Tri-Cities area. In 1989, the Legislature assigned to Washington State University the sole responsibility for ensuring that those needs were met. The university was directed to operate a branch campus in the Tri-Cities area. This branch campus replaced the Tri-Cities University Center, a center that served many of the educational needs of the federal government's Hanford operation, the Hanford contractors, and the citizens of the area, for many years.

Recently, the U. S. Department of Energy has designated Battelle's Pacific Northwest Laboratory in the Tri-Cities as the Center for Environmental Excellence and as its Molecular Science Center. The department has also designated the Hanford site to be the focus of waste management and environmental restoration efforts.

SUMMARY:

By November 1, 1991 Washington State University will submit a proposal to the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The proposal will describe a long-term development plan for a Center for Environmental and Molecular Sciences at Washington State University/Tri-Cities.

The purposes of the proposed center are described. These purposes include coordinating the relationship of the university with federal research efforts in the Tri-Cities area, and initiating collaborative research efforts with Hanford contractors and staff. With the approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the center will also develop upper-division and graduate instructional programs in environmental assessment, remediation technology, and molecular sciences. The center will develop expertise necessary to assist in technology transfer, and will foster strong, cooperative relationships with governmental agencies and businesses interested in hazardous waste and molecular science research and development. The center will also ensure that expertise from all Washington universities and colleges is available to aid federal research efforts. In addition, the center will ensure that the state and its institutions of higher education are able to benefit from those efforts. Other purposes of the proposed center are also described.

The elements of the proposal to the board are delineated. The board is directed to review the proposal and to evaluate its policy and fiscal aspects. The board will review the proposed center's role and mission within the context of the development plan for Washington State University's branch campuses. By February 1, 1992 the board will recommend to the Governor and the Legislature whether to establish a Washington State Center for Environmental and Molecular Sciences. If the board does recommend establishment of the center, the recommendation will include the long-term development needs of the center.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

This proposal will help build the information base for a potential world-class research center.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Rep. Lane Bray, prime sponsor; Larry Ganders, WSU (pro); Ray Isaacson, Benton Co. Commissioner (pro)