

**FINAL BILL REPORT**

**SB 5264**

**C 179 L 91**

**SYNOPSIS AS ENACTED**

**Brief Description:** Authorizing the department of natural resources to establish a program in community and urban forestry.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Oke, Bailey, Rinehart, Stratton and Bauer.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS**

**BACKGROUND:**

Urban forestry relates to all trees including those in parks, greenbelts, and along streets. Many Washington urban areas have significant forested lands which need to be managed. Urban forestry improves real estate values, creates better air quality and improves the quality of life. Wildlife is also helped and large wildlife species exist in many urban settings. The urban forest has a positive effect on tourism and a city's visual impact. The development of greenbelts, urban paths and recreation areas would be enhanced by a cooperative state/local urban forestry program.

The Department of Natural Resources has supported the growth of community and urban forestry efforts with the aid of a \$35,000 federal grant from the USDA Forest Service last biennium. Limited financial assistance for urban forestry projects has been provided to municipalities.

Communities are addressing the impact of growth as it relates to community forest programs and are seeking to maintain the character of their community and the "Evergreen State." The department does not have a state funded community and urban forestry program but increasingly communities are requesting technical assistance.

The department has been asked by local governments to take a leadership role in coordinating the efforts of both the public and private sectors involved in community forestry by providing the technical assistance needed to insure the retention and enhancement of community forests. The President's tree initiative, "America the Beautiful," has been supported by Congress and Washington State's federal grant for community forestry will increase to approximately \$220,000 for the 1991-93 biennium. As a condition of the federal grant, the department is required to develop a community forestry program that will include an advisory council, a volunteer

component, a program coordinator and an assessment of community forestry tree resources.

The state and local governments will provide state funds and in-kind services to match federal funds in the future.

**SUMMARY:**

The Department of Natural Resources may establish and maintain a community and urban forestry program. The department will advise, encourage and assist municipalities, counties and other public and private entities in the development of community and urban forestry programs.

The department may support the development of cooperative projects among the public and private sectors that are directed at tree planting, education, research, nursery tree improvement, and urban fishery/wildlife projects, as well as other projects that involve the establishment, maintenance and protection of community and urban forests.

Financial and technical assistance is made available to municipalities, counties and others. The department is authorized to receive and disburse federal monies as well as donations from other public and private sources.

**VOTES ON FINAL PASSAGE:**

Senate	43	2	
House	97	0	(House amended)
Senate	45	0	(Senate concurred)

**EFFECTIVE:** July 28, 1991