

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6257

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES,
FEBRUARY 5, 1992

Brief Description: Applying the state wildlife and recreation lands management act.

SPONSORS: Senators Metcalf, Oke, Owen and von Reichbauer; by request of Interagency for Outdoor Recreation

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6257 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Metcalf, Chairman; Oke, Vice Chairman; Owen, Snyder, and Sutherland.

Staff: Gary Wilburn (786-7453)

Hearing Dates: February 5, 1992

BACKGROUND:

The 1990 Legislature directed the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) to assess the operation and maintenance (O&M) needs of state-owned habitat, natural areas, parks, and other recreation lands. The IAC report found that since the early 1980's, state agency budgets for O&M have been unable to keep pace with increasing demands on state-owned natural resources. This is a result of increasing public uses of such lands, as well as the increasing number of facilities maintained by the state to serve the state's growing population.

For example, the Trust Land Transfer and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Programs have allowed state agencies to acquire over \$200 million of areas to be administered as state parks, wildlife habitat, and conservation and natural areas. The IAC report concluded that for state-owned lands, a one-time catch-up expenditure of \$39.5 million is required to repair facilities and roads, and to replace equipment which has exceeded its planned life cycle. The report also found that annual funding for O&M should be increased \$10.9 million to prevent future backlogs from occurring, and to properly care for new lands acquired during the 1989-1991 biennium.

SUMMARY:

Legislative findings are made regarding acquisition of areas for wildlife and recreation, and the need for an increase in funding for operation and maintenance of such lands and facilities. The state wildlife and recreation lands management account is created. Funds in the account are

subject to appropriation and are to be used to support operation and maintenance of such state-owned lands, including basic stewardship, improved or developed resources, human use management, and administration. The types of costs allowable for such uses are enumerated.

Minimum percentages for distribution for these four purposes are set, with the remaining to be considered unallocated. If the initial appropriations to the account are insufficient to meet basic stewardship needs, the unallocated amount is to be used for this purpose. Agencies eligible for funding are the Departments of Fisheries, Natural Resources, and Wildlife, and the state Parks and Recreation Commission. Minimum percentages for appropriation to each agency are also set, with the remainder to be allocated to each based upon an evaluation by the Office of Financial Management of remaining unfunded needs.

A state Wildlife and Recreation Lands Task Force is created to develop recommendations for new long-term funding. Its membership is composed of seven members representing different regions of the state and ex officio nonvoting members from state natural resource agencies. The report shall be submitted to the Legislature and the Governor by September 15, 1992.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

The task force is also to report on funding needed to assist counties with costs of local services provided to state wildlife and recreation lands.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

The bill sets out a needed distribution formula for operation and maintenance funds for state agencies administering wildlife and recreation lands. The task force study is needed to identify a fund source for this purpose.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Joe LaTourrette, WWRC (pro); Mike Ryherd, WWRC (pro); J. K. Johnson, WSMA (pro); Hal Schlomann, NMTA (pro)