

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5667

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 17, 1993

Brief Description: Creating a water trail recreation program.

SPONSORS: Senators Talmadge, Fraser, Moore, Sutherland, Bluechel, A. Smith and Haugen

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chairman; Barr, Deccio, McCaslin, Moore, Sutherland, and Talmadge.

Staff: Cathy Baker (786-7708)

Hearing Dates: February 17, 1993; February 19, 1993

BACKGROUND:

Puget Sound is a popular area for kayaking and canoeing. In recent years, user groups have advocated the establishment of a marine trail system that would include a series of waterside campsites, approximately five to eight miles apart, extending from Olympia to the Canadian border. The sites are intended to be used as camping areas for users of human-powered beachable vessels (i.e. kayaks and canoes).

In January, 1993, the State Parks and Recreation Commission adopted rules designating a marine trail system and providing for accommodation of trail users in existing campsites and use areas in 12 state parks along Puget Sound. However, statutory authority, including authority to assess an annual fee, would provide the commission with additional guidance to establish a more comprehensive marine trail program.

SUMMARY:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission is authorized to create a water trail recreation program which would include managing a system of camping areas at public and private beaches. The commission is authorized to plan and construct suitable facilities; publish, distribute and charge a fee for maps; and adopt rules to administer the water trail recreation program.

The water trail recreation program will be supported by a statewide permit. A water trail program account is created; all proceeds from sales of permits shall accrue to the account and be used only for water trail program purposes. Violations of the permit requirement will constitute a civil infraction.

The commission may contract with private or public entities to develop and implement a water trail program. The commission is protected from liability for certain activities with a recreational use immunity clause.

A Water Trail Advisory Committee is created in order to assist the commission in the development of water trail facilities and programs. Members of the advisory committee shall be appointed by the commission.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Marine trail systems have been established in other states. Creation of a marine trail system in Washington would draw many visitors. Marine trail users are willing to pay for the program through annual permit fees and volunteer efforts.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Bob Wilder, State Parks and Recreation Commission;
Thomas Steinburn, Sandie Nelson, Washington Water Trails Association