

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5676

AS OF FEBRUARY 15, 1993

Brief Description: Providing for the coordination and planning of greenways.

SPONSORS: Senators Drew, McDonald, Fraser, Deccio and Erwin

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

Staff: Gary Wilburn (786-7453)

Hearing Dates: February 17, 1993

BACKGROUND:

Greenway corridors involve a cooperative approach emphasizing the scenic, natural, recreational and historic values of private and public lands within the corridor. A greenway may serve as urban separators and provide greater community identity, as well as provide linkages between communities, recreational facilities, and other resources. The President's Commission on Americans Outdoors has recommended that a network of greenways be established across the United States.

The Washington Department of Transportation administers the scenic and recreational highway system, which provides scenic observation points, safety rest areas, and signage explaining important scenic and historic features. In 1991 the Legislature directed the department to develop a highway heritage program to preserve the unique scenic character of the state's highways and provide travelers with information regarding unique natural, cultural and historic features accessible by highways.

In King County the Mountains to Sound Greenway corridor is proposed by a variety of nongovernmental organizations and public agencies to link scenic, recreational and other attractions along the I-90 corridor from Snoqualmie Pass to Puget Sound. A greenway trust has been formed as a partnership of private citizens, local communities, businesses, conservationists and public agencies to pursue the greenway proposal. The objectives of the proposal include making accessible recreational and outdoor education opportunities, preserving the special character of corridor communities, enhancing wildlife migration corridors, and promoting tourism.

SUMMARY:

Legislative findings are made regarding the benefits of greenways. Greenways are defined as corridors that link parks, protected areas, rivers and other water bodies,

historic sites and scenic settings by means such as urban parkways, scenic highways, historic roads, trails, waterways or connective open spaces. Identification, planning and implementation of greenways are declared a public and state purpose for which appropriated funds may be expended.

The Governor is authorized to review proposals and designate greenways of state significance. The Governor may direct that a plan be prepared for the long-range protection of a designated greenway. The plan shall be prepared by a public agency with the assistance of an advisory committee, or be prepared by a nonprofit organization representative of the agencies and interests affected by the greenway. Entities to be consulted in preparation of the plan are specified.

Agencies and organizations affected by the greenway are encouraged to coordinate their efforts to promote the legislative purposes for greenways, including economic growth, environmental protection, and public recreation and education. The elements of greenway plans are listed, including recommendations for management, wildlife habitat enhancement and wildlife passage, heritage and environmental education, landscape protection, enhancing and connecting existing protected areas, trails development, and standards for facilities such as signs, viewpoints and rest areas.

Following a public hearing, the Governor may approve, revise or disapprove the plan. Once approved, state and local agencies are to consider the plan in developing and implementing their respective plans and programs. Expenditures of appropriated funds for preparation or implementation of a greenway plan are declared to be for a public purpose.

The greenways planning authority is not to be interpreted as requiring any actions inconsistent with comprehensive growth management plans or land use regulatory authority of the state or local governments. Actions taken under the act shall meet requirements that are a necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds. If the United States Secretary of Transportation finds a part of the act in conflict with conditions on the allocation of federal funds, that portion of the act is declared inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 9, 1993