

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 6222**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS, JANUARY 31, 1994**

**Brief Description:** Establishing the Washington state horse park.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Fraser, Amondson, L. Smith, Anderson, M. Rasmussen, Morton and Roach

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6222 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chairman; Deccio, Moore, Morton and Sutherland.

**Staff:** Gary Wilburn (786-7453)

**Hearing Dates:** January 28, 1994; January 31, 1994

**BACKGROUND:**

In 1986 the Legislature directed the state Department of Agriculture to investigate the economic impact of Washington's horse industry. Based upon that study, and with the assistance of the Washington State Horse Council, the department recommended the creation of a state-owned and operated equestrian center to promote and serve the recreational horse industry. The horse council subsequently pursued this recommendation with the state Parks and Recreation Commission for the potential location of such a facility at Lewis and Clark State Park in Lewis County.

A State Parks feasibility study was completed in 1990, and funds were appropriated in the 1991-1993 capital budget for initial acquisition of land parcels adjacent to the park. Subsequently, the site was found not suitable for the facility, but an alternative site in Lewis County has been identified, which is partially in state ownership.

The Mount St. Helens Equestrian Center Foundation has been created as a private, nonprofit corporation to assist in promoting and funding the proposed equestrian center. The foundation proposes the center to be located at a site approved by the state and operated under a publicly-created Washington nonprofit corporation. The corporation would be directed by an authority of both public officials and private representatives. It is proposed that the funding would be from a variety of sources, including "nonrecourse" public purpose bonds repayable from the operating revenues of the facility.

**SUMMARY:**

Findings are made regarding the economic and recreational benefits of equestrian activities to the state. The Mount St. Helens Equestrian Center is established and shall be located at a site in Lewis County approved by the State Parks and Recreation Commission.

The center shall be operated by the Washington State Horse Park Authority, authorized to be created by the Governor in the same manner as a private nonprofit corporation under Washington law. The Authority shall be an instrumentality of the state, whose purpose shall be to oversee and direct the planning, development, marketing and operation of the equestrian center. The Authority will be governed by an 11-member board, composed of: (a) six appointees by the Governor; (b) an appointee by the foundation board; (c) an appointee by the Lewis County commission; (d) the Director of the State Parks and Recreation Commission; (e) the Director of the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development; and (f) the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine of Washington State University.

The Authority's powers and duties are enumerated. Authority members serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses. The obligations of the Authority or any liabilities or claims against it shall be enforced only against the assets of the Authority and not against the state or any instrumentality of the state. Authority members and employees are protected against liability in their individual capacity except for acts of dishonesty or crime. The Authority is exempt from several provisions of the civil service laws relating to public employees, as well as from the authority of the department of general administration regarding procurement of materials and services.

The Authority may issue nonrecourse revenue bonds, payable solely out of the special funds created by the Authority for repayment of such bonds. The procedures for and limitations of such bond issuance are specified. The bonds issued may not be deemed any obligation of the state or pledge of the faith and credit of the state.

Several agencies of the state and higher education institutions are directed to explore with the Authority opportunities for collaboration on matters regarding the center and equestrian activities generally.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:**

A state agency or other subdivision of the state that provides public land for the equestrian center under lease shall ensure the Authority is financially responsible for cleanup of any site contamination that may be caused by the center's operation.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested January 17, 1994

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Will provide economic and recreational benefit to the entire state by addressing a major need for such a facility for equestrian activities.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: Karen Munro, Morgan Horse Club of WA; Todd Trenin; Jim Sherrill; Dave Schilperoort; Bob Wilder, State Parks; Mary Evans, WA State Horsemen Inc.