

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 6485**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS, FEBRUARY 4, 1994**

**Brief Description:** Modifying interagency for outdoor recreation grant and loan priorities.

**SPONSORS:** Senator Sutherland

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6485 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

**Staff:** Cathy Baker (786-7708)

**Hearing Dates:** January 28, 1994; February 4, 1994

**BACKGROUND:**

The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) administers grant programs for state and local agencies to plan for, acquire, and develop lands for outdoor recreation and conservation purposes. One of these grant programs, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), was established by the Legislature in 1990. Since 1990, the WWRP program has funded approximately \$179 million in land acquisition projects.

In 1991, the Growth Management Act (GMA) was amended to add various provisions. One of these provisions was a policy directing state agencies, when awarding grants or loans for public facilities, to give preference to counties, cities, or towns that are a party to a county-wide planning policy required under the GMA for some counties. It is suggested that an additional preferential factor be considered in awarding grants or loans for public facilities: whether the jurisdiction is affected by the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan.

In 1986, Congress enacted the Columbia River National Scenic Area Act which established a national scenic area to protect the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge. The scenic area encompasses a six county area in both Oregon and Washington. The Scenic Area Act called for the preparation of a Management Plan to be implemented through land use ordinances in each of the six counties.

In 1980, the Legislature enacted a law directing the IAC to place a high priority on acquisition, development, and renovation of parks to be located in or near urban areas. IAC

has implemented this policy by awarding a point preference to grant applications for projects that are located in proximity to urban areas.

**SUMMARY:**

A finding is made that the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) loan and grant evaluation system should consider recreational opportunities in both rural and urban areas. A finding is also made that the IAC can provide increased economic benefits to the state by expanding recreational opportunities in rural and distressed areas.

Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants or loans for a county, city, town or special district to finance public facilities, the agency is to consider whether the county, city or town is affected or impacted by the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan. In awarding grants and loans for public facilities, the state agency is to accord additional preference to county, cities, towns, or special districts affected by the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan.

The state policy directing the IAC to place a high priority on the acquisition, development, and renovation of parks located in or near urban areas is repealed.

The IAC is required to adopt rules establishing acquisition policies and priorities for the acquisition and development of trails and water access sites funded by the outdoor recreation account. In determining the acquisition and development priorities for trails and water access proposals, the IAC shall consider two additional criteria: economic benefits, and tourism demand. The IAC shall also consider whether the proposal is consistent with a national recreational plan.

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE:**

The policy which directs the IAC to place a high priority on acquisition of urban parks is not repealed.

IAC is to consider only one additional factor in determining acquisition priorities for trails projects funded from the outdoor recreation account: whether the proposal is consistent with a national scenic area plan.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested January 25, 1994

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

The bill will help redress a bias toward urban projects in the evaluation process that the IAC uses to rank projects for funding. The bill will also give jurisdictions affected by the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area Act a comparable

advantage to that of jurisdictions planning under the Growth Management Act when applying for state grants and loans.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Teri Russon-Hay, Skamania County (pro)