

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5173

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation, February 10, 1999

Title: An act relating to a Cascade foothills recreational area study.

Brief Description: Creating a Cascade foothills recreational area study.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Oke and Fraser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 2/1/99, 2/10/99 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5173 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Morton, Oke, Rossi, Snyder, Spanel and Stevens.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: With increased population and the fact that the Puget Sound region will grow by more than a million people by the year 2010, methods need to be developed to both increase recreation access and to disperse recreation throughout the Puget Sound Basin to provide greater opportunities for more people.

Summary of Substitute Bill: With the population increase in the Puget Sound, residents will seek greater opportunities for outdoor recreation. Changes in demographics, more active lifestyles and improvements in recreational technology lead to a growing public demand for areas and facilities in which to recreate. The western slope of the Cascade foothills from Canada through Thurston County provides a wealth of existing and potential outdoor recreation areas. The purpose of the act is twofold: first, to recognize the significant outdoor recreational potential of the area, and second, to create a Cascade Foothills Task Force to study and make recommendations for creating greater recreational opportunities. Cascade foothills means the public lands within the Cascade range drainages lying between 300 and 3,000 feet above sea level located within Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King, Pierce and Thurston Counties. This does not include facilities which are devoted to developed nonrecreational uses, such as buildings, parking lots and equipment storage facilities.

The Legislature designates a Cascade foothills recreation area which must generally encompass the Cascade foothills. The area is designated solely to guide the responsibilities of the task force and the agencies participating in the study. The Cascade Foothills Task Force is created, composed of 19 members: one appointed by each of the governing bodies of the six counties in the area; the chair of the Washington Parks and Recreation

Commission, serving ex officio; the Commissioner of Public Lands, serving ex officio; the supervisor of the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest; two members of the Senate from each caucus, appointed by the President of the Senate; and two members from the House from each major caucus, appointed by the Co-Speakers of the House. Six members are appointed by the Governor from the public at-large.

The task force reviews and makes recommendations on existing and future outdoor recreational needs and opportunities; makes an assessment of the 20-year growth projection for recreational demand; inventories existing facilities; reviews existing facilities; and reviews state lands within the foothills that may be managed principally or in part for outdoor recreation. The task force must provide an assessment of existing wildlife and conservation functions and recommendations for a regional entity to promote and expand outdoor recreation.

The Governor in consultation with the affected counties provides initial staffing.

The task force consults with the governing bodies of the cities and counties within the Cascade foothills area and holds meetings in the immediate vicinity of the foothills. The task force provides an initial work plan and budget to the fiscal and parks committees of the Senate and House by October 1, 1999, and presents a final report and recommendations no later than December 15, 2001.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The commission of the original bill is changed into a task force. The emphasis is placed on public lands and the report is due in 2001 not 2000. The area to be studied is increased from 500 to 2,000 feet above sea level to 300 to 3,000 feet.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The study is needed to disperse recreation in the Puget Sound and to create more recreation opportunities.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Charlie Raines, Sierra Club; Len Balson, Nature Conservancy; Mark Levensky, The Evergreen State College; Rex Derr, Parks Commission; Jim Fox, IAC; Anne Cox, Friends of State Parks.