

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5255

As Passed Senate, March 13, 1999

Title: An act relating to the Washington Conservation Corps.

Brief Description: Changing Washington Conservation Corps provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Oke, Rasmussen and Finkbeiner; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 1/28/99, 2/3/99 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/15/99, 2/17/99 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/13/99, 43-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: David Johnson (786-7754)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Long, McDonald, Rasmussen, Rossi, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, West and Wojahn.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: Established in 1983, the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) employs unemployed residents who are between 18 and 25 years old. It is intended to provide them with a meaningful work experience and is administered by six state agencies. Due to a sunset provision the program is scheduled to expire on June 30, 1999. It is believed that continuation of the program, along with some expansion and updating, would be beneficial.

Summary of Bill: The sunset provisions affecting the WCC are repealed. A number of modernizing changes are made, including changed agency names. The WCC definition of distressed county is replaced by that used in RCW 43.168.020. It allows for optional raises for corps members and up to two years of membership, rather than one. The Department of Agriculture is removed from the program. Spending authority is clarified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): This program gives the state a great benefit at a very low cost. It gives the participants long-term job skills, leadership, and resource conservation experience. The program helps tremendously with the great maintenance needs that exist.

Testimony Against (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): None.

Testified (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): PRO: Steve Sherlock, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Sheryl Wimberly, Department of Natural Resources; Josh Summit, citizen; Jim King, Coalition for Parks and Recreation; Rob Spath, Department of Ecology; Pam Wilkins-Ripp, State Parks; Ed Oliphant, Lewis County Public Works.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): The Washington Conservation Corps is critical for maintenance of state parks and state wildlife areas and to provide low-cost trail maintenance and environmental restoration.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Testified (Ways & Means): Rex Derr, WA State Parks (pro); Steve Sherlock, Fish & Wildlife; Rob Spath, WA State DOE (pro), Sheryl Wimberly, DNR (pro).