

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5694

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation, March 1, 1999

Title: An act relating to primary and secondary forest roads.

Brief Description: Creating a consistent policy for the creation and maintenance of forest roads.

Sponsors: Senators Stevens, Hargrove, Morton, Jacobsen, Oke, Snyder, T. Sheldon and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 2/25/99, 3/1/99 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5694 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill 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: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: Primary and secondary forest roads are used extensively by the public. In some areas, public roads used for forestry have been closed to the general public reducing the amount of lands available for dispersed public use.

Summary of Substitute Bill: In the Department of Natural Resources' planning for development of primary and secondary forest roads, the department must be sensitive to compatible public access. Primary and secondary forest roads in danger of failing are part of an on-going upgrading process for future use, and the department must review the road system on public lands in order to develop a schedule to upgrade. The Department of Natural Resources must give special consideration to the federal Americans With Disabilities Act in providing roads that would allow vehicle use for those persons who are disabled. The department may stockpile road building materials and require the stockpiling of materials for those persons who are building roads for forest use.

The department, as manager for the trust lands, must as part of its management program undertake a study and report back to the Legislature by December 1, 2001, with an inventory of state primary and secondary forest roads available for public recreation in the Cascade foothills; on the problems on public lands caused by vandalism and recommendations on how to approach the problem; and on garbage and illegal dumping on public lands. The department must also review the misuse of public resources and develop recommendations on road damage and on old road failure in order to upgrade the road system on public lands.

When making temporary closures, the department prepares a list for notification of counties, cities and other user groups. The list includes the area to be closed and the use pattern for each road and includes as much information on recreational and public use as possible.

The Commissioner of Public Lands must establish a intergovernmental task force to work on increasing public access to public lands. The task force includes federal and state land management agencies and representatives of private landowners. Four legislators are appointed from each large caucus of the Senate and House.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute is more narrow in scope than the original bill and relates to general public use, not recreational use. Procedures for permanent road closures are eliminated and the study is expanded to address all road issues. The road inventory will be limited to the Cascade Mountain foothills.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 2, 1999.

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

Testimony For: Road closures on state and federal lands are limiting access by the public. Public use of forest roads can be compatible with logging.

Testimony Against: The bill is too broad and would totally change the way the state manages public trust lands. The costs would be too great.

Testified: PRO: Shari Brewer, Natural Resources, Rural Communities; Clark Chase, Washington Prospectors and Mining Association; Andy Warber, Grays Harbor Disabled Sportspersons Association; Tip Hudson, Washington Cattlemen's Association; Ron Schultz, national Audubon Society; Bill Pickell, Washington Contract Loggers; CON: Jennifer Belcher, Commissioner of Public Lands, DNR.