

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5710

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
State & Local Government, March 3, 1999

Title: An act relating to local retail sales and use tax for zoo and aquariums.

Brief Description: Authorizing a sales and use tax for zoo and aquarium purposes.

Sponsors: Senators Wojahn, Rasmussen, Winsley, Oke, Franklin, Goings, Eide and Swecker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 2/17/99, 3/3/99 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5710 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Hale, Haugen, Horn, Kline and McCaslin.

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: The Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma currently finances and maintains a zoo, aquarium, and wildlife park which are currently accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association. Continued funding for these facilities from existing sources of revenue is questionable.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Upon the joint request of a metropolitan park district and a city with a population of more than 150,000, a county legislative authority in a county with a population of more than 500,000 and less than 1,000,000 (Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma, City of Tacoma, and Pierce County) may submit an authorizing proposition to the voters for the imposition of a sales and use tax, the rate of which may not exceed one-tenth of 1 percent. The proposition must be placed on a ballot no later than one year after the date of the joint request. If approved by a majority of those voting on the proposition, the moneys received from this tax can be used solely for the purpose of providing funds for the costs associated with the maintenance, construction, and improvements of zoo, aquarium, and wildlife preservation and display facilities that are currently accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association.

If the sales tax proposition has been approved by the voters, a zoo and aquarium advisory authority is created. The initial board of the authority consists of:

- three members appointed by the county legislative authority to represent unincorporated areas;

- two members appointed by the county legislative authority of the city with the largest population within the county; and
- two members jointly appointed by the legislative authorities of the remaining cities within the county representing at least 60 percent of the combined populations of the cities.

No term may be less than one year nor more than three years in duration. Provisions are made for changing the number and allocation of board positions.

The county treasurer (or home rule county equivalent) receives all money from the new zoo tax and disburses the money to the aquarium advisory authority. In addition to the standard purposes of maintaining the facilities, the aquarium advisory authority may, consistent with a joint effort among the county, metropolitan park district, and city:

- add to and improve the facilities, accept gifts and donations, and regulate the facilities together with all lands and rights-of-way necessary for the facilities;
- contract with the United States or any agency thereof, the state or any agency thereof or any unit of local government for the purposes of designing, maintaining, or operating the facilities;
- contract with any governmental agency, private person or firm for the use of any part of the facilities or structures or land; and
- fix rates and charges for the use of the facilities.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: It is clarified that the zoo and aquarium authority's powers are subject to limitations in the agreement among the local governments.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This is a popular facility. Money is tight and demands are increasing. We are trying to regionalize some of the funding. It is a cooperative effort and the people must vote for the additional sales tax. It is an option to help us operated and preserve a regional facility.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: David Allen, Fran McNair, Executive Council for a Greater Tacoma; Randy Lewis, City of Tacoma; Tom Otten, Patty Henson, Tacoma Metropolitan Park District/Zoo Society; David Hellyer, Susan Hulbert, Northwest Trek Wildlife Park; Dave Westberg, Lynn Larsen, Stationary Engineers; Eric McNair, Charlie Brown, Citizen.