

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6147

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation, January 20, 2000

Title: An act relating to state parks.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington state parks gift foundation.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Swecker, Thibaudeau, McAuliffe, Oke and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 1/13/2000, 1/20/2000 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6147 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: David Johnson (786-7754)

Background: An increase in population and recreational activity has put increased demands on the state's park system. As a result, state parks have suffered from insufficient funding to both maintain its facilities and expand the services it offers to the public.

Park systems in some cities and other states have created nonprofit organizations to gather contributions to help support their increased needs.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A nonprofit foundation is established by the Parks and Recreation Commission to receive support, cooperation, and donations from outside sources for the purposes of benefitting the state parks. The foundation is governed by a board of 15 directors, initially appointed by the Governor and subsequently elected by the membership.

The foundation is to be organized so as to achieve federal tax-exempt status and solicit money from private sources. Funds may be used to create an endowment, distributed immediately, or both. Funds are awarded at least annually by a competitive grant process to projects suggested by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill expands the purpose of the foundation to include receiving support, cooperation, and noncash gifts. The substitute increases the number of directors from seven to 15. The substitute requires the Parks and Recreation Commission, rather than the Governor, to file the articles of incorporation. The substitute allows directors (after the initial directors) to be elected by the membership rather than continue to be appointed by the Governor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This is a great method of providing help the parks system needs. There is tremendous citizen and corporate support for the parks. A foundation will be an effective means of encouraging, building, and directing that support, especially gaining the support of those who don't give to government. A private foundation is more flexible and can act with more speed to address park needs. Other states that have formed foundations have found great success, if done properly. The close relationship of the commission directing requests to the foundation is essential.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Jim King, Coalition for Parks and Recreation; Rex Derr, State Parks.