

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6229

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation, January 27, 2000

Title: An act relating to promoting wildlife viewing.

Brief Description: Promoting wildlife viewing.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 1/26/2000, 1/27/2000
[DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6229 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: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

Background: Wildlife viewing is an increasingly popular form of outdoor recreation throughout the U.S. and the world. Washington State does not have an organized state program designed to promote wildlife viewing, but it does have a program that protects and manages watchable wildlife.

Many opportunities exist to increase the awareness of wildlife viewing opportunities and to organize wildlife viewing events.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The departments of Fish and Wildlife and Community, Trade, and Economic Development must host a conference on promoting wildlife viewing tourism during the calendar year 2000. The conference must develop strategies to increase revenues to communities with wildlife viewing opportunities, foster community partnerships, provide state agency assistance to local communities, provide state funding, and integrate wildlife viewing into the Lewis and Clark bicentennial commemoration. A summary of conference recommendations must be submitted to the Legislature by December 15, 2000.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is authorized to provide funds for up to three grants for wildlife viewing promotional events and present a report to the Legislature.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is directed to manage wildlife resources in a manner to provide viewing opportunities.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement that the department maximize wildlife viewing opportunities is changed to providing opportunities to view wildlife. The restriction to provide wildlife viewing opportunities only in rural areas is removed, so that opportunities can be provided anywhere.

Appropriation: \$45,000 general fund.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Watchable wildlife programs have the potential to be greatly expanded and they will provide recreation to a great many people at very little cost.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Rocky Beach, Mike O'Malley, WSWF; Ron Shultz, National Audubon Society; Katrina Weiks, National Audubon Society Tacoma Chapter; Beck Bogard, WA State Hotel and Motel Assn.; Robin Pollard, WA State Tourism Office.