

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6552

As Passed Senate, February 15, 2000

Title: An act relating to parks and recreation in the west slope of the Cascade foothills.

Brief Description: Studying recreational opportunities available in the west slope of the Cascade foothills.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Oke, Kohl-Welles, Fraser and Spanel).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 2/2/2000 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/8/2000 [DPS].

Passed Senate, 2/15/2000, 48-0.

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: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6552 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: Increasing population and more active lifestyles will greatly increase the demand for outdoor recreation in the region between the west slope of the Cascade foothills and the Puget Sound. A review of outdoor recreational needs and opportunities could increase recreation access and provide diverse recreation opportunities for all residents with varying ages, physical capacities, and recreational preferences.

Summary of Bill: Findings are made about the anticipated expanding need for outdoor recreation opportunities. The State Parks and Recreation Commission must study and recommend existing and future outdoor recreational needs and opportunities in the west slope Cascade foothills. Cascade foothills means the nonurbanized area within the Cascade range

drainages lying between 300 and 3,000 feet above sea level located within Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King, Pierce and Thurston counties.

The study includes an examination of existing recreational demand, and the projection for demand in the next 20 years for the region. The study must detail the recreational uses demanded, users demanding, and the facilities needed to accommodate these recreation demands. Included is a review of state lands suitable for recreation, an overview of wildlife and conservation values, funding recommendations, and public and private coordination.

Cities and land managers, both public and private, are consulted for the study. Parks may accept contributions of funds or services to assist the survey

A final report and recommendations must be presented no later than December 15, 2000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on April 15,2000.

Testimony For (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): There is real and significant growth and demand for recreation opportunities in the counties this bill affects. Parks is the right agency to do the study. It has the experience, relationships, and ability to do the job well. Funding and time available are barely adequate to do the study. The ability to accept private donations will be a help to fund the program.

Testimony Against (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): The requirement that a partial environmental analysis be done comes too early in the process. It should be a complete environmental analysis in the next phase after this study.

Testified (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): Rex Derr, State Parks.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): There are over one million people projected to move to the Puget Sound region in the next 20 years. We need to begin planning now for recreation in the next decades.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): The requirement for an assessment of wildlife and conservation functions is premature, and would be difficult to accomplish within the appropriation.

Testified (Ways & Means): Rex Derr, State Parks; Jim King, Coalition for Parks and Recreation (pro); Ron Shultz, National Audubon Society (pro).