

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6566

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
State & Local Government, February 3, 2000

Title: An act relating to local parks and recreation.

Brief Description: Allowing for the creation of a local parks authority.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Long, Swecker, Kline, Hale, Costa, Thibaudeau, Prentice, Spanel, Gardner, Bauer, Shin, Jacobsen, B. Sheldon, Patterson, McAuliffe and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 1/27/2000, 2/3/2000 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6566 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: Over the past few years, the City of Seattle has explored various options concerning the funding and operation and management of its zoo and aquarium.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The legislative authority of any city with a population of over 150,000 that is not in a metropolitan park district (Seattle, Spokane) may levy an additional regular property tax not exceeding \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for constructing, maintaining, and operating a public zoo, aquarium, parks, and open space. The ballot proposition must propose an initial tax rate or amount and may also propose a maximum rate or amount. Voter approval can be at a special or general election, by majority vote. If prorating is necessary, this additional levy is reduced before the levies for acquisition of open space, affordable housing, and emergency medical services.

The city may contract with one or more nonprofit corporations or other public organizations for the overall management and operation of a zoo and/or aquarium. No such contract may have a term exceeding 30 years. Requirements are specified regarding public notice and hearing before the approval of the contract. Notwithstanding any provision in the charter of the city, the nonprofit corporation or public organization may manage, supervise, and control those employees of the city employed in connection with the zoo or aquarium. Any terms, conditions, or practices contained in a collective bargaining agreement in effect on the effective date of this act are not affected.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill created a new taxing district called a local parks authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For (original bill): The bill would establish a stable base of public funding that does not compete with general fund dollars; increase efficiency and decrease system duplication; encourage private giving; and keep our zoo world class.

Testimony Against (original bill): Responsibility will be blurred and confused. Park and zoo jobs could be plundered. Money and property could be shuffled in ways that defy accountability.

Testified: Tim Baker (pro); John Barber (pro); Chris Leman (con).