

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8001

As of January 28, 1999

Brief Description: Relating to the federal land and water conservation fund.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Oke and Bauer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 1/18/99.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Staff: Victor Moon (786-7469)

Background: There are two major sources of federal funding for wildlife programs. The federal Pittman-Robertson and Wallop-Breaux are administered by the Department of Fish and Wildlife at the state level. They help all states to protect fish and wildlife resources and are allocated to the states based on a formula. The two funding sources come from taxes on firearms, ammunition, bows and arrows, fishing tackle, motorboat and small engine fuels, and a few other sources.

A large majority of Washington State residents and state visitors actively pursue the state's diverse fish and wildlife resources. Indeed, 75 percent of those persons who responded to a 1996 opinion survey said that observing and learning about birds and other wildlife species is an important part of their lives. Wildlife recreation is an important part of the Washington State economy. Wildlife recreation has accounted for more than \$350 million in annual retail sales and \$150 million in wages and salaries for almost 8,000 jobs related to this industry in the State of Washington.

The federal land and water conservation fund was created in 1965 to preserve, develop, and ensure that all Americans have access to outdoor recreation. The fund, so far, has funded the acquisition of almost seven million acres of park land, water resources, wildlife habitat, and open space. It has provided for the development of 37,000 state, municipal, and local parks and recreation projects. The funding from this source, which is derived from offshore oil drilling, has been reduced in recent years as part of the attempt to balance the federal budget. Now that the federal budget is balanced, Washington and other states seek further funding from the land and water conservation fund and a dedicated source for the protection and management of fish and wildlife.

Summary of Bill: The Congress is asked to pass a resolution to restore and revitalize federal funding and to create a new dedicated fund for state fish and wildlife management to be administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

