

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5295

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines, February 19, 2001

Title: An act relating to creating the Washington wildlife conservation foundation.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington wildlife conservation foundation.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Swecker, Regala, Haugen and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines: 2/1/01, 2/19/01 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5295 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; Constantine, Oke and Snyder.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: There are a limited number of entities that can collect and distribute funds to state agencies to protect and advance wildlife in the state of Washington. Creating a new conservation foundation allowing individuals and corporations to contribute money to help the state's wildlife population is one method which will increase wildlife abundance and access.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A Washington Wildlife Conservation Foundation is established in order to help the programs, activities and policies of the state that preserve, protect and manage wildlife. The intent of the Legislature is to enhance wildlife conservation capabilities and to increase the abundance and access to wildlife.

A tax deductible method is created through the establishment of a conservation foundation that would allow individuals and groups to raise funds and contribute them to the state wildlife. A Wildlife Conservation Foundation is created with a nine-member board of directors to be appointed by the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The board must be appointed by September 1, 2001, and no member of the board may be a state employee. The board members do not receive compensation or per diem for their services to the foundation. Members serve four-year terms. The board will meet, organize and designate by a majority vote of treasurer, secretary and additional officers to carry out the board's activities.

The purpose of the foundation is to improve the abundance of wildlife, to solicit and accept aid or contributions for wildlife, to solicit and accept grants for the acquisition, construction, improvement and development of potential wildlife projects and to accept private funding and donations that assist in enhancing Washington's wildlife species and habitat. The foundation may accept gifts or grants from any governmental agency from any persons, firms or corporations. The funds collected are considered private funds and are held in an appropriate

account outside of the state treasury. The foundation and its officers are responsible for the approval of and recording of receipts, payments and the proper filing of required reports. Meetings must be open to the public.

A severability clause is included.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Public access to wildlife and hunting access is added. Public meetings are required and other language is clarified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on the original bill.

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

Testimony For: Other states use this method to give people a tax free method to contribute to wildlife programs and the programs have helped wildlife.

Testimony Against: There is no public access and hunting is not mentioned. The goals of the foundation are not clear.

Testified: Ron Schultz, Audubon Society (pro); Russ Cahill, Fish and Wildlife Commission (pro); Mik Mikitik, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (pro); Tom Gibbons (con).