

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5298

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines, February 5, 2001

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 & Shorelines: 2/1/01, 2/5/01 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; Constantine, Hargrove, McDonald, Morton, Oke, Snyder and Stevens.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

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 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 2001. 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, 2001.

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

Appropriation: \$45,000 general fund.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 2001.

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

Testimony For: The state should promote nonconsumptive wildlife programs since they bring the state substantial income.

Testimony Against: Spending state funds to promote watchable wildlife programs is not needed and won't benefit hunters. Keeping public access to public and private lands is becoming a problem.

Testified: PRO: Rocky Beach, Mike O'Malley, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife; Ron Schultz, Audubon Society; Len Barson, Nature Conservancy; CON: Tom Gibbons, Western Washington Wildlife Council.