

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6598

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Education, February 7, 2002

**Title:** An act relating to natural science and wildlife education.

**Brief Description:** Creating the Washington natural science and wildlife education partnership fund.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kohl-Welles, Horn, Jacobsen, Winsley, Johnson, Prentice, Rossi, Hewitt, Eide, McAuliffe, Rasmussen and Finkbeiner.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 2/6/02, 2/7/02 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6598 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Carlson, Finkbeiner, Hewitt, Hochstatter, Johnson, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Regala and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Heather Lewis-Lechner (786-7448)

**Background:** Various private entities, such as Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, the Pacific Science Center, the Washington Audubon Society, and Woodland Park Zoo, have educational outreach programs available for schools. These programs are designed to help children learn about science, wildlife, or the environment in a wide variety of ways including the development of materials for in-class curricula, field trips and out-of-school opportunities as well as teacher training.

Under current Washington law, all schools give instruction in science with special reference to the environment. Specifically, instruction about conservation, natural resources and the environment is provided at all grade levels and in an interdisciplinary manner.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The natural science and wildlife education partnership trust fund is established. The trust fund's purpose is to further develop natural science and wildlife education programs that are fully integrated with the state's early academic learning requirements by providing state funds, to the extent that funds are appropriated, to match money or the value of in-kind services from other sources. Money from the fund is disbursed through a competitive grant-making process to eligible nonprofit organizations that can provide matching funds or in-kind services. The criteria for the grants is established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and any expenditures from the fund must be authorized by SPI or its designee. Minimum requirements for the criteria and types of eligible uses for the grants are listed in the bill. An appropriation is not required for expenditures from the fund.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill was not considered. The proposed substitute heard by committee was amended to clarify that the trust fund will operate only to the extent funds are appropriated.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** There is a need for children to learn about nature, the environment and science. Hands-on or on-site experiences are essential for children. Those experiences get children excited about and involved with their learning. We want to be able to expand our programs in order to bring them to more children. Right now these programs are entirely funded by corporate donations. We are not asking for money right now but only want to start the discussion with the state by creating this trust fund. Even having the future possibility of state involvement could help convince donors to donate now.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Martin Flynn, Melinda Williams, Frank Hein, Woodland Park Zoo Society; Nina Carter, Katrina Wiehs, Audubon Society.