

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1973

As Passed House:
March 14, 2003

Title: An act relating to promoting tourism.

Brief Description: Promoting tourism.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Trade & Economic Development (originally sponsored by Representatives Veloria, McCoy and Kenney).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Trade & Economic Development: 2/28/03, 3/4/03 [DPS];
Appropriations: 3/8/03 [DP2S(w/o sub TED)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/14/03, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Directs the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, working with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and other appropriate entities, to coordinate the development of an annual business and marketing plan to promote nature-based tourism in Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Veloria, Chair; Eickmeyer, Vice Chair; Skinner, Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Chase, Condotta, Kristiansen, McCoy, Pettigrew and Priest.

Staff: Tracey Taylor (786-7196).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Trade & Economic Development. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Conway, Cox, DeBolt, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter,

Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Miloscia, Pflug, Ruderman, Schual-Berke, Sump and Talcott.

Staff: Patricia Linehan (786-7178).

Background:

Washington is 68,139 square miles of diverse geography, geology, and climate. The west side of the state has ancient rain forests, miles of Pacific Ocean coastline, some of the state's largest cities and the Space Needle. The east side of the state is traditionally dry and sunny, with a big sky, wide open spaces, farms and ranches. There are also spectacular canyons, gorges and the Grand Coulee Dam. The state is divided by the majestic Cascade mountains. All in all, Washington offers many opportunities for tourists of all interests.

In 2000 over 25.9 million visitors enjoyed Washington parks. There are also thousands of licensed elk and deer hunters that take advantage of the outdoors. Sport fishermen and sport shellfishers enjoy the salmon, steelhead, and razor clams found in Washington.

Wildlife viewing is an increasing industry that generates annually \$1.7 billion and supports 21,000 jobs in this state. In fact, wildlife viewing is the fastest growing outdoor activity and segment of the travel industry. This activity thrives in the rural areas and the opportunities for wildlife viewing primarily occurs on public lands.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill:

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development is directed to coordinate the development of an annual business and marketing plan, in conjunction with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and other appropriate agencies and organizations, to promote nature-based tourism in Washington. This includes the coordination of the promotion of nature-based tourism; the promotion of hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing; the creation of partnerships among agencies, organizations, tribes and local communities; the provision of educational materials to minority and local communities about the rules, regulations and recreational opportunities; and the promotion of local industries.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: (Trade & Economic Development) There are many great opportunities for recreational and family activities here in Washington. Some local areas are involved in marketing such tourism possibilities; however, there is no state-wide focus on nature-based activities. There are great things we can do with our state and natural resources agencies to showcase Washington, especially with the upcoming celebration of the Lewis & Clark Expedition. Nature-based tourism is growing domestically, but it is already huge in Europe.

We need to spread the word about Washington's diverse climate and the possibilities observe wide variety of animals and plants to attract both domestic and international visitors.

Testimony For: (Appropriations) Recreational spending for fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing is a \$2.2 billion industry and it supports about 21,000 jobs in the state. If the marketing plan can be strengthened, we believe that it can increase the amount of money that this industry produces, resulting in both direct and indirect economic gains.

(Concerns) The proposed bill is very important and we support Representative Kenney's amendment. Nature-based tourism brings enormous benefits to the state. The revenue benefit that will come to the state from this investment will accrue primarily to the general fund, so the general fund should be the account that pays for it. We would be concerned if you funded this program from an account, such as the State Wildlife Fund, which would not derive the revenue that it would generate.

Testimony Against: (Trade & Economic Development) None.

Testimony Against: (Appropriations) None.

Testified: (Trade & Economic Development) Becky Bogard, Washington Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus; Jim King, Citizens for Parks and Recreation; and Steve Rodrigues, Columbia Gardens.

Testified: (Appropriations) (In support) Representative Veloria, prime sponsor.

(With concerns) Jim King, Washington Citizens for Parks and Recreation.