

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6186

As of January 16, 2004

Title: An act relating to the creation of the legacy trust for recreation and conservation.

Brief Description: Establishing the legacy trust for recreation and conservation.

Sponsors: Senators Esser, Oke, T. Sheldon, Swecker, Hale, Roach, Haugen and Murray; by request of Commissioner of Public Lands.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Parks, Fish & Wildlife: 1/19/04.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PARKS, FISH & WILDLIFE

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: The Department of Natural Resources manages 2.1 million acres of forest lands to produce revenue for certain beneficiaries, including schools and universities. The public also uses these lands for outdoor recreation at the department's campgrounds and trails. A portion of the lands have been set aside as natural areas or natural resource conservation areas to conserve areas with ecological or scenic value.

Revenue from management of state lands is dedicated to specific beneficiaries and may not be used to support recreation and conservation programs. Currently, the department's recreation and conservation programs are funded with state general funds and other dedicated funds.

Public use of state lands has been increasing, and state general fund support for management of recreation areas and natural areas has decreased.

Summary of Bill: The legacy trust for recreation and conservation is created. The trust may include lands suitable for commercial and natural resource management, but may not include private land primarily suited to commercial agriculture. Revenues from management of these trust lands must be used to support public recreation and conservation of Department of Natural Resources lands. The state Attorney General is charged with ensuring proper administration of the trust.

The department is authorized to receive funds for the purpose of establishing the trust from grants, gifts, loans, or legislative appropriation. The Board of Natural Resources must approve all acquisitions of real property for the trust. The department may acquire lands for the legacy trust that are subject to deed restrictions, when the restrictions are consistent with the purposes of the trust.

Legacy trust lands must be managed by the department in the same manner as other state trust lands. Property in the legacy trust may be exchanged or transferred with the approval of the Board of Natural Resources.

Up to 25 percent of revenue from legacy trust lands may be used by the department, after appropriation, for management activities on legacy trust lands. The remaining funds may be spent, after appropriation, for the support and management of Department of Natural Resources recreation areas, natural areas, and natural resource conservation areas. The department must develop a six-year expenditure strategy for use of legacy trust revenues, and a submit a biennial spending plan to the Legislature each even-numbered year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2004.

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