

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6242

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Energy & Water, February 4, 2004
Ways & Means, February 9, 2004

Title: An act relating to establishing a statewide strategy for land acquisitions and disposal.

Brief Description: Establishing a statewide strategy for land acquisitions and disposal.

Sponsors: Senators Parlette and Berkey.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Energy & Water: 1/22/04, 2/4/04 [DPS-WM, DNP].

Ways & Means: 2/9/04 [DPS (NR)].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & WATER

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6242 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Morton, Chair; Hewitt, Vice Chair; Doumit, Hale, Hargrove, Honeyford and Oke.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Regala.

Staff: Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6242 as recommended by Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Chair; Hewitt, Vice Chair; Parlette, Vice Chair; Carlson, Doumit, Hale, Honeyford, Johnson, Pflug, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Sheahan, B. Sheldon and Winsley.

Staff: Brian Sims (786-7431)

Background: Because land acquisitions by state agencies for recreation and habitat purposes have long-term consequences for the state and the counties in which the lands are located, concern has been expressed that the Legislature must be as well informed as possible regarding why and how the acquisitions are made. The most recent compilation of such information is the 1999 Public and Tribal Lands Inventory, a report to the Legislature by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation that provides a baseline inventory of public lands and identifies the total acreage of public and tribal lands, their ownership, general location, and primary purpose.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Legislature declares its intent to establish a statewide strategy for acquisition and disposal of recreation and habitat lands and to clarify authority for centralized, interagency control over its implementation.

The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation must report to the Legislature and the Governor by June 30, 2005. The report must include an inventory of recreation and habitat land transfers by state agencies since 1980, covering specified types of transfers, principal use of the land, agencies involved, costs and returns, funding sources, and authorizations. The report must also include a recommended statewide strategy for such transfers, covering priorities and policies, determination of need, centralized control, the costs and benefits of payments in lieu of taxes and a "no net gain" policy.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The report must also be sent to the Governor. Additional information provided by local governments can also be included. Further direction regarding study of payments in lieu of taxes is added. A "no net gain" policy for counties that have large amounts of public land must also be considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The state needs an accurate account of how much land is publicly owned and a strategy to govern when and how land goes into public ownership. Currently, there is no statewide coordination of goals and objectives or comprehensive evaluation of consequences. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is already moving on a similar effort. There are serious consequences for local government and the local economy when land is taken out of the tax base. Information is needed to help set a limit on the amount of public land in a county. Private owners can be better caretakers than the public.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Parlette, prime sponsor (pro); Jim Potts, WA Assn. of Counties (pro); Mike Ryherd, WWRC (pro); Jamie Henneman (pro); Hertha Lund, Farm Bureau (pro); Sophia Byrd, Assn. of Counties (pro); Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy (pro).