

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5448

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 9, 2005

Title: An act relating to community outreach regarding grizzly bears.

Brief Description: Providing grants to provide information regarding grizzly bears in the north Cascades.

Sponsors: Senators Poulsen, Swecker, Brown, Berkey, Delvin, Jacobsen, Kline, Brandland and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/3/05, 2/9/05 [DP-WM, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Oke, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser and Spanel.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Morton and Stevens.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Grizzly bears have been present in the North Cascades for centuries. It is estimated that, at their peak, between 50,000 and 100,000 grizzly bears lived in the lower forty eight states. The lower forty eight states currently support fewer than 1,100 grizzly bears.

In Washington, it is estimated that between five and twenty grizzly bears currently reside in the North Cascades. Grizzly bears are considered endangered by both the federal and state governments. According to a federal report, there were twenty confirmed sightings and eighty two probable sightings of grizzly bears in the North Cascades between 1983 and 1991.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Fish and Wildlife must provide one or more grants for community outreach projects and programs to provide the public with information about grizzly bears in the North Cascades. The projects funded must have the objective of providing accurate information about grizzly bear ecology, biology, behavior, and the manner in which residents can safely coexist with bears. The projects must also provide opportunities for residents of the North Cascades to express their ideas, opinions, and concerns.

An appropriation of \$45,000 is made to the Department of Fish and Wildlife to fund these projects for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006.

Appropriation: \$45,000.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Educating the public about the behavior of grizzly bears will improve the public's understanding of the bears. Grizzly bear education will also teach individuals how to prevent negative interactions with bears.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Ed Owens, Hunters Heritage Council; Chris Morgan, Grizzly Bear Outreach Project; Damon Roman; Polly Dyer; Steve Pozzanghara, Department of Fish and Wildlife.