

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6735

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 2, 2006

Title: An act relating to studying environmental education.

Brief Description: Requiring a study of environmental education.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Schmidt, Pridemore, Delvin, Rockefeller, Eide, Kohl-Welles and Esser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/1/06, 2/2/06 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Higher Education; Weinstein, Vice Chair, Early Learning & K-12; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Berkey, Delvin, Kohl-Welles, Pflug, Rasmussen, Rockefeller and Shin.

Minority Report: Do not pass.
Signed by Senator Schoesler.

Staff: Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

Background: The Environmental Education Association of Washington (EEAW) is a statewide non-profit organization of educators that offers training, materials, and advocacy for environmental education. In 2005, the EEAW received a grant from a private foundation to develop a comprehensive environmental education plan for Washington. The EEAW intends that the comprehensive plan incorporate any available research on how environmental education promotes career exploration for students, can be used to meet graduation requirements, or assists underserved youth.

Summary of Bill: The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must conduct an environmental education study in partnership with public and private entities invested in quality environmental education experiences. The study must provide empirical evidence, exemplary models, and recommendations about career development, service learning, graduation requirements, underserved youth and demographic groups, and professional development for community-based service organizations or state and local agencies. The study must provide findings and recommendations useful to the Washington State comprehensive environmental education plan, a public-private endeavor intended to ensure quality outdoor environmental education opportunities for every student, family, and community in Washington.

The OSPI provides an interim update to the Legislature by December 1, 2006, and must complete the study no later than October 1, 2007.

Appropriation: None.

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: Washington State needs to increase the environmental education in schools. This bill will help the Environmental Education Association build research for environmental education across the state and engage students in the community. This is an investment in our future. We want to provide positive outcomes to our students' education. Environmental educational experiences are important to parents. It spans very different elements of curriculum and brings relevance to the world. We need to show young people how the environment works. With this bill, a difference could be made in the community. This program has high school graduation requirements connections. We can educate students about the environment much better with this program.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator McAuliffe, Prime Sponsor; Heath Packard, Environmental Education Association; Martin LeBlanc, Sierra Club; Jared Burbridge, Parent; Brett Bishop, Shellfish Growers Association Conservation Districts; Tayleer Deatherage, PGS Student; Art Hoover, Black Hills High School.