

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1192

As of March 20, 2007

Title: An act relating to the director of parks and recreation.

Brief Description: Authorizing the governor to appoint the director of parks and recreation.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Kessler, B. Sullivan, Miloscia, Kagi and Wood).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/07, 64-33.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 3/19/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) consists of seven members, each appointed by the Governor for six year terms. The Legislature has charged the Commission with care and control over lands set aside by the Commission for park purposes. Statutes provide the Commission with an array of mandatory duties and discretionary authorities.

Specifically, the Commission may determine the qualifications of and employ a Director of Parks and Recreation (Director). The Director must carry out duties as set forth in statute and as assigned by the Commission.

Summary of Bill: The Governor must, with the consent of the Senate, appoint the Director. The Director serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The state park system and its budget have grown greatly over time, and it is time for the Governor to play a greater role by appointing the Director. There have also been many changes in the governance of the state park system over time, and this move is a natural product of the evolution of the agency. Allowing the Governor to appoint the Director would improve the accessibility and accountability of the

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agency, a necessity as seen in problems relating to the parking fee and the potential commercialization of certain state parks.

CON: The Commissioners and the Directors of the recent past have been good people and effective leaders. Specifically, recent Directors have been accessible and quick to respond to questions and concerns. In recent years, the State Parks and Recreation Commission has made many improvements and changes to the agency, and has expressed a willingness to continue these improvements. Since the current system is not broke, there is no need to fix it. Recent Governors have viewed the Director as part of the Governor's cabinet, allowing a close connection between the agency and the Governor's office. The Commission actively listens to the public and user groups, and has not heard a major outcry for change.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Kessler, prime sponsor; Ray Benish, Manny Minkowski, Citizens for St. Edward State Park,

CON: Dick Wagner, Center for Wooden Boats; Gary Worthington, citizen; Joan Thomas, Joe Taller, Washington Parks and Recreation Commissioner; Michael Racine, Washington Scuba Alliance; Jim King, Citizens for Parks and Recreation; Jonathan Guzzo, Washington Trails Association.