

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6226

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, January 28, 2008

Title: An act relating to enhancing the natural resource collections at the Washington park arboretum.

Brief Description: Enhancing natural resource collections at the Washington park arboretum.

Sponsors: Senator Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation:1/23/08, 1/28/08 [w/oRec-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: The University of Washington Botanic Gardens (Botanic Gardens) is a unit within the College of Forest Resources. In Turn, the Washington Park Arboretum (Arboretum) is housed within the Botanic Gardens.

The Arboretum began in 1934. At that time, the city of Seattle and the University of Washington (UW) signed an agreement to allow UW to develop and manage the Arboretum and gardens within Washington Park. The UW remains responsible for the Arboretum's plant collections, while the city holds title to the land and manages its trails, roads, and turf.

According to the Botanic Gardens, the 230 acre Arboretum contains approximately 20,000 trees, shrubs, and vines representing approximately 4,600 different species. Collections include rhododendron, azalea, mountain ash, pine, spruce, cedar, fir, crabapple, holly, magnolia, camellia, and Japanese maple.

The Legislature created the Natural Heritage Program (NHP) within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in 1981. The NHP's statutory duties include compiling and distributing information on Washington's natural heritage resources, which include plant community types, aquatic types, and unique geologic types.

Summary of Bill: The Arboretum must strive to meet several goals set by the Legislature, including enhancing public appreciation for the aesthetic diversity of plants, providing education to students and the public regarding plants, and meeting conservation and maintenance standards.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The UW Botanic Gardens endowed curatorship (endowed curatorship) is established. The curator must focus on activities including the preservation, maintenance, and presentation of the Botanic Garden's collections.

A mechanism is created to fund the endowed curatorship. One million dollars is appropriated to the UW Botanic Gardens endowed curatorship account, newly created in the custody of the Treasurer. The Treasurer must release this amount when the UW requests the money and demonstrates that it will provide non-state matching funds. The UW must deposit the state and non-state funds into the UW consolidated endowment fund, with the earnings used solely for purposes of the endowed curatorship. If the Treasurer has not released these funds to the UW by June 30, 2013, they return to the general fund.

The NHP must host a working conference on the future of arboretums and botanic gardens in Washington. The NHP must work with appropriate arboretums, botanic gardens, and interested public and private entities in preparing for and conducting the conference. The conference should address such issues as the challenges facing arboretums and botanic gardens, strategies for addressing these challenges, and recommendations on how the state and local governments might assist arboretums and botanic gardens. The NHP must submit a summary of the conference proceedings to the Legislature by December 15, 2008.

Appropriation: \$1,000,000 General Fund-State.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 9, 2008.

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: There is great support from the public and donors for the Washington Park Arboretum, which is on the cusp of a major rebirth. It is a public park, open to access for all to enjoy the open space and botanic collections. Without a curator, the Arboretum will not be able to fulfill its potential as a botanic garden.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Donald Harris, City of Seattle Parks and Recreation.