

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1084

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to creating the board on geographic names.

Brief Description: Creating the board on geographic names.

Sponsors: Representatives McCoy and Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/17/11, 1/31/11 [DPS].

<p>Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reestablishes the Board on Geographic Names.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Darneille, Dunshee, Hurst, McCoy and Miloscia.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Taylor, Ranking Minority Member; Overstreet, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander and Condotta.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

State Board on Geographic Names.

In 1983 the Washington State Board on Geographic Names (BGN) was established. The purpose of the BGN was to:

- establish a procedure for the retention and formal recognition of existing geographical names;

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.

- standardize the procedures for naming or renaming geographical features within the state;
- identify a responsible agency to coordinate geographic names among local, state, and federal agencies;
- avoid duplication of names for similar features; and
- retain the significance, spelling, and color of names associated with the early history of Washington.

Membership on the BGN included the State Librarian, or a designee; the Commissioner of Public Lands (Commissioner), or a designee; the chairperson of the Washington State Heritage Council; and four members of the general public appointed by the Commissioner.

Specifically, the BGN was authorized to:

- establish the official names for the lakes, mountains, streams, places, towns, and other geographic features within the state;
- assign names to lakes, mountains, streams, places, towns, and other geographic features for which no single generally accepted name has been in use;
- cooperate with other public entities to establish, change and/or determine appropriate names in order to avoid duplication of place names within the state;
- serve as the state's liaison with the United States Board on Geographic Names; and
- issue a list of names approved by the BGN.

The BGN members who were not public employees were compensated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the amount of \$50 for attending official meetings, plus travel expenses. Members of the BGN who were public employees were compensated for travel expenses by the agency that the person represented.

The BGN was eliminated in 2010.

Board of Natural Resources.

The Board of Natural Resources (BNR) was established in 1986. The BNR was to perform duties relating to appraisal, appeal, approval, and hearing functions provided by law and to establish policies to ensure that acquisition, management, and disposition of lands and resources are based on sound principles designed to achieve the maximum effective development and use of such lands and resources. In addition, the BNR also constituted the Board of Appraisers and the Commission on Harbor Lines.

Membership includes the Governor, or a designee; the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the Commissioner; the director of the University of Washington School of Forest Resources; the dean of the Washington State University College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resources Sciences; and a representative of those counties that contain state forest lands acquired or transferred pursuant to mineral interests.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The BGN is reestablished as a constituted board of the BNR and has the same duties as the original BGN.

The BGN must establish a Committee on Geographic Names (Committee) to assist the BGN in its duties and to provide broader contextual, public, and tribal participation in the naming of geographic features in the state. Membership on the Committee includes the State Librarian, or a designee; the Commissioner, or a designee; the director of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, or a designee; a representative of the Washington state tribes; and three members of the public, selected by the Commissioner. The Commissioner is the chairperson for the Committee.

The Committee must hold at least two meetings each year, and may hold special meetings as called by the chairperson. The Committee is required to establish rules of conduct in carrying out its duties.

The Committee must cooperate with the United States Board on Geographic Names, and must make reports and recommendations to the BGN following each meeting. Recommendations regarding adoption of names may only be made following consideration at two committee meetings.

The BGN must consider the recommendations made by the Committee for adoption of names and must either adopt the name as recommended or refer the matter back to the Committee for further review. Names adopted by the BGN must be published in the Washington State Register.

Secretarial and administrative support for the BGN is provided by the DNR.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The Committee is established to make recommendations to the BGN regarding geographic names and to cooperate with the United States Board on Geographic Names. The Committee must make recommendations to the BGN. The BGN must consider the recommendations and either adopt the recommended name or refer the matter back to the Committee for further review. Support for the BGN is provided by the DNR.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) None.

(In support with concerns) The BGN was eliminated last year and left our state with no liaison with the United States Board on Geographic Names.

The DNR recognizes the importance of the BGN. Concerns deal with the increased workload of staff to provide outreach, and the expansion of the existing BNR. The BNR is supported by trust fund moneys and the BGN is not related to the trust. However, the DNR could support the BGN if funding is providing by the general operating budget.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Clay Sprague, Department of Natural Resources.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.