

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5610

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections, February 17, 2011

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

Brief Description: Creating the board on geographic names.

Sponsors: Senators Conway, Harper and Murray.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/15/11, 2/17/11 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5610 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Pridemore, Chair; Prentice, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Chase, Nelson and Roach.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

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;
- 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, or a designee; the chairperson of the Washington State Heritage Council; and four members of the general public appointed by the Commissioner on Public Lands.

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.

Specifically, the BGN was authorized to:

- establish the official names for the lakes, mountains, streams, places, towns, and other geographic features within the state;
- 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.

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 the person represented.

The BGN was eliminated in 2010.

Board of Natural Resources. The Board of Natural Resources was established in 1986. The Board of Natural Resources 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 Board on Natural Resources also constituted the Board of Appraisers and the Commission on Harbor Lines.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): The BGN is re-established as a constituted board of the Board of Natural Resources. The duties of the BGN are the same as those authorized in 1983. Membership on the BGN includes the members of the Board of Natural Resources plus the State Librarian and the Director of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, or their designees.

A Committee on Geographic Names (Committee) is created to assist the BGN in its duties to provide broader contextual, public, and tribal participation in the name of geographic features in the state.

Membership on the Committee includes:

- three members of the public; and
- a tribal member.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): The substitute creates a Committee to assist the BGN in its duties to provide broader contextual, public, and tribal participation in the name of geographic features in the state.

Membership on the Committee includes:

- three members of the public; and
- a tribal member.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: This is a good bill that needs to be amended to reflect the changes made in the House. DNR recognizes the importance of the board, but we have concerns about the increased work load for staff to provide outreach and administrative support. The Board of Natural Resources is supported by trust money and the BGN is not related to the trust. However, the department could support the BGN if funding is provided by the operating budget. This bill is important because we need an ongoing forum to discuss geographic concerns. Washington was once Indian country, and we need to be aware of and respect the history of our state.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Clay Strong, DNR; Anita Latch, Robert Satiacum, Spirit of the Red Road.