

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSJM 8004

As Passed Senate, March 2, 2011

Brief Description: Requesting the reestablishment of the road leading to the upper Stehekin Valley within the North Cascades National Park.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Marine Waters (originally sponsored by Senators Parlette, Nelson, Tom, Zarelli, Fraser, Hewitt, Kline, Hatfield, Murray and Shin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Marine Waters: 2/21/11 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/02/11, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & MARINE WATERS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Joint Memorial No. 8004 be substituted therefor, and the substitute joint memorial do pass.

Signed by Senators Ranker, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: Established in 1968, the North Cascades National Park Complex contains three park units that are all managed as one, which include the North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas. These protected lands are united by a contiguous overlay of Stephen Mather Wilderness, which was established by Congress in 1988 in the Washington State Wilderness Act.

The town of Stehekin is located at the end of Lake Chelan and accessible only by boat, floatplane, or on foot. The Stehekin Valley Road was originally built as a wagon road in 1899 and runs over 20 miles from the lake into the national park. It provides access to Stephen Mather Wilderness trailheads and North Cascades National Park from the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area.

The Park Services has made the lower portion of the road accessible to vehicles but the upper portion of the road is closed. Part of the upper portion was damaged in a 1995 flood, and more of the road was washed out when the Stehekin River flooded in October 2003.

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.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Legislature requests the United States Congress, the United States Department of the Interior, and the National Park Service to work with Washington State to reestablish the road allowing access to the upper Stehekin Valley within the North Cascades National Park.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: The 1988 Wilderness Act in no way intended to limit a recreational access corridor within the North Cascades National Park. It will take an act of Congress to reestablish the road from High Bridge to Cottonwood Camp. There is no net gain, and no net loss of wilderness. The reestablishment of the road will cost less than \$500,000. It will allow access for all generations, young and old, to hike and take day trips from Stehekin to the North Cascades National Park.

CON: This memorial sets a bad precedent in that it removes land from the wilderness.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Parlette, prime sponsor.

CON: Charles Raymond, Quakers.