

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2119

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to designating Palouse falls as the state waterfall.

Brief Description: Designating Palouse falls as the state waterfall.

Sponsors: Representatives Schmick, Fagan, Haler and Moscoso.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Operations & Elections: 1/29/14 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/14, 98-0.

Passed Senate: 3/4/14, 46-3.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Designates Palouse Falls as the official state waterfall.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Taylor, Ranking Minority Member; Young, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Christian, Kretz, Manweller, Orwall, Robinson and Van De Wege.

Staff: Amanda Ondrick (786-7296) and Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Located in Franklin County, the Palouse Falls consists of an upper falls, with a drop of about 20 feet, and a lower falls, with a drop of about 180 feet. The canyon at the falls is 377 feet deep. The falls and canyon were created by the Missoula Floods that swept across Eastern Washington during the Pleistocene epoch.

Summary of Bill:

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.

Palouse Falls is designated as the official waterfall of Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Palouse Falls is a famous and unique waterfall created by a glacial flood. It is over 10,000 years old. Palouse Falls is a series of three waterfalls and the two smaller falls lead into the main drop, which is 198 feet long. It has sparkling water, colorful basalt rock, and is located several miles away from any town. Being away from civilization helps keep the falls pristine. Palouse Falls is a great place to hike and has marmots, eagles, and wild flowers. The falls are located in semi-arid desert and in the summer the green grasses are abundant and the water is beautifully crystal clear.

According to the internet, Palouse Falls was named sixth on the top 10 best United States waterfalls list and tenth on the list of the world's most amazing waterfalls. Palouse Falls holds a world record for a kayak drop. In 1841 it was discovered on the Lewis and Clark expedition. The Indian Big Beaver legend is about Palouse Falls and in the legend, a beaver's death created the falls. Last year, over 100,000 people visited the waterfall and it is known world-wide.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Schmick, prime sponsor; and Grace Nelson, Emma Hulett, John Riser, Lindsay Knudson, and Timothy Harder, Washtucna School District.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Daniel Farber, Washington State Parks.