
Environment Committee

ESSB 5843

Brief Description: Concerning outdoor recreation.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Ranker, Parlette, Pearson, Rolfes, Hewitt, Litzow, Conway, Hasegawa and McAuliffe).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Provides the additional consideration of programs that utilize veterans for at least 50 percent of their program implementation or administration for the director of the State Parks and Recreation Commission to consider when awarding grants from the Outdoor Education and Recreation grant program.
- Requires the Governor to, subject to funding, appoint and maintain a senior policy advisor on outdoor recreation with a focus on promoting and increasing opportunities for outdoor recreation in Washington.

Hearing Date: 3/23/15

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) is responsible for implementing the Outdoor Education and Recreation (OER) grant program, which is funded from the Outdoor Education and Recreation Account. This grant program is unofficially known as the "No Child Left Inside" program. The OER grant program is designed to provide opportunities for public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, after-school programs, and community-based programs that provide outdoor education opportunities to schools that are fully aligned with the state's essential academic learning requirements.

In implementing the OER grant program, the director of the Commission must set priorities and develop criteria for grant awards. The director must consider a number of factors when doing this, including the contribution to the reduction of academic failure and dropout rates, the use of

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research-based curriculum, contributions to healthy life styles through outdoor recreation and sound nutrition, the use of state parks as venues, the maximization of the number of participants that can be served, a commitment to matching and in-kind resources, the creation of partnerships with private entities, opportunities for students to directly experience and understand nature, and the inclusion of ongoing program evaluation, assessment, and reporting of their effectiveness.

The Commission only makes grants from the OER grant program when the Legislature appropriates funds to do so. Grants have not been made from the OER grant program since the year 2008.

Summary of Bill:

The consideration of programs that utilize veterans for at least 50 percent of their program implementation or administration is added to the list of considerations for the director of the Commission to consider when awarding grants from the OER grant program.

The Governor is required to, subject to funding, appoint and maintain a senior policy advisor on outdoor recreation. The policy advisor must focus on promoting and increasing opportunities for outdoor recreation in Washington. A particular focus must be given to achieving economic development and job growth through outdoor recreation. The appointed senior policy advisor must be confirmed by the state Senate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 13, 2015.

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