
Capital Budget Committee

HB 1008

Brief Description: Concerning the acquisition of land by state natural resources agencies.

Sponsors: Representatives Shea, Taylor, Short, McCaslin, Buys, Schmick and Haler.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that prior to purchasing lands in any county, the Departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Parks) must first identify for sale department- or commission-owned lands in the same county of equal or greater acreage than the property to be acquired.
- Requires the DNR, DFW, and Parks to sell the identified land as expediently as is reasonably practicable after the relevant property is acquired.
- Requires the DNR, DFW, and Parks to make monthly updates to the Legislature and the Office of Financial Management.

Hearing Date: 2/10/17

Staff: Christine Thomas (786-7142).

Background:

According to the *Washington Public Lands Inventory* (Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, July 2014), the land area of Washington totals nearly 46 million acres. Non-public ownership is about 57 percent of the total (26 million acres) with the remaining 43 percent (20 million acres) in public ownership. Of the publicly-owned acreage, 12.7 million acres is owned by the federal government, 6.5 million acres by the state, and the balance by local governments.

The management of land owned in the name of the state has been delegated to a number of state agencies and universities. The management approach for the land is generally determined by the jurisdiction, authorities and priorities of the agency delegated the management responsibilities. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), and

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the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Parks) are three agencies that manage many acres of undeveloped public lands in the state. Each of these agencies implements different management goals. The DNR is primarily responsible for managing land in a manner that satisfies its fiduciary duty to the various state trust beneficiaries, including common schools, counties, and other public institutions; the DFW manages land to enhance wildlife habitat and hunting access; and Parks primarily provides recreational access. The largest number of acres, 5.7 million, is managed by the DNR.

Summary of Bill:

The DNR, DFW, and Parks must follow certain procedures when acquiring real property:

- Prior to acquiring lands in any county, the agencies must identify for sale agency-owned land in that same county of equal to or greater acreage than the property to be acquired;
- After acquiring lands, the agencies must dispose of the identified property for sale as expediently as is reasonably practicable; and
- The agencies must provide monthly updates on the status of the sales process to the appropriate committees of the Legislature and the Office of Financial Management.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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