

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5660

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government, Elections & Information Technology

Title: An act relating to removing references to specific nonoperational historical facilities from state statute.

Brief Description: Removing references to specific nonoperational historical facilities from state statute.

Sponsors: Senators Hunt, Becker and Darneille; by request of Washington State Historical Society.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government, Elections & Information Technology: 3/17/17, 3/21/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes responsibilities of the Washington State Historical Society (Society) with respect to the Center for Columbia River History.
- Removes the requirement that the State Capitol Historical Museum be used to house the collections of the Society and renames the museum the historic Lord Mansion.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, ELECTIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hudgins, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Koster, Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Gregerson, Irwin, Kraft and Pellicciotti.

Staff: Joan Elgee (786-7106).

Background:

The Washington State Historical Society (Society) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization recognized in law as a trustee of the state to, among other duties, preserve and exhibit

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materials that demonstrate Washington's cultural, artistic, and natural history. The Society is governed by a board of trustees which includes seven public officials who serve ex officio. The board appoints its director with the consent of the Governor.

Congress created the Vancouver National Historic Reserve (Reserve) in 1996. The Reserve includes the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Vancouver Barracks, Pearson Air Museum, Pearson Airfield, Officers Row, and a section of the Columbia River waterfront. The Reserve is managed by a partnership composed of the National Park Service, the United States Army, the State of Washington, and the City of Vancouver. The Society is the state's designated partner representative for the Reserve and must:

- participate in coordination meetings and in the development of plans and policies associated with the Reserve;
- partner with Washington State University (WSU) and other agencies to manage the Center for Columbia River History and with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation for preservation and rehabilitation of the site; and
- develop and submit budget requests and oversee the management of all funds appropriated by the state for the Reserve.

The Center for Columbia River History was formed in 1990 as a consortium of the Society, Portland State University, and WSU to promote research, publish materials, and otherwise provide information about the Columbia River. The consortium has since dissolved.

The historic Lord Mansion (Mansion) in Olympia was donated to the state in 1939. The Mansion and grounds are designated as part of the state capitol and named the State Capitol Historical Museum. The Mansion is to be used to house and interpret the Society's collection. The Museum is closed.

Summary of Bill:

The directive to the Society to partner with WSU and other agencies to manage the Center for Columbia River History is repealed.

The State Capitol Historical Museum is renamed the historic Lord Mansion. The Mansion is no longer required to house the Society's historical collections.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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) This bill is a technical fix to update the historical society statutes. The Columbia River Center is no longer operational and the Capitol Historical Museum is not suitable for housing historical materials. The Lord Mansion would stay in state ownership and the carriage house would still be available for the community.

(Opposed). None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Hunt, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.