

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2587

As Reported by House Committee On:
Housing, Community Development & Veterans

Title: An act relating to establishing a program for the designation of state scenic bikeways.

Brief Description: Establishing a program for the designation of state scenic bikeways.

Sponsors: Representatives Ramel, Shewmake, Duerr, Stonier, Dufault, Doglio, Mead, Thai, Lekanoff, Fitzgibbon, Pollet, Leavitt and Davis.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing, Community Development & Veterans: 1/29/20, 1/31/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Parks and Recreation Commission to establish a scenic bikeways program for the designation and promotion of bicycle routes of notable scenic, recreational, cultural, or historic value.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & VETERANS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Morgan, Vice Chair; Jenkin, Ranking Minority Member; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Frame, Johnson, J., Leavitt and Ramel.

Staff: Cassie Jones (786-7303).

Background:

The Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) has authorization to care, control, and supervise all parks and parkways in Washington. The Commission consists of seven members, all appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate.

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.

The Commission is required to establish a scenic bikeways program for the designation and promotion of bicycle routes of notable scenic, recreational, cultural, or historic value. Scenic bikeways may be comprised of bicycle paths, multiple use trails, highways, or trail facilities managed by the Commission.

Proposing a Route.

Any person may propose the designation of a scenic bikeway route. Prior to designation of a route by the Commission, the Commission must provide an opportunity for public comment. Proponents of routes are encouraged to consider the criteria by which the Commission will review and approve routes and consider locating routes in ways that encourages local economic development in proximity to the route. The Commission must give priority to the designation and implementation of scenic bikeways that will add variety to the geographic location, topography, route length and difficulty, and cultural, historic, scenic, and recreational value of the scenic bikeway system or that will complete existing bicycling networks.

Criteria for Approving a Route.

The Commission must review proposed scenic bikeways in consultation with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and confirm that the proposed route:

- is of notable scenic, recreational, cultural, or historic value;
- is located on government or privately owned land, is consented to by the land owner; and
- to the extent feasible:
 - is not located on heavily trafficked roads when less-trafficked roads are available as a suitable alternative;
 - is not located on highways without shoulders or bike lanes when highways with shoulders or bike lanes are available as a suitable alternative;
 - avoids complex intersections or other locations that would reduce the ease of use of the scenic bikeway by users;
 - is colocated with locally developed bicycle-supportive infrastructure, including bike lanes, multiuse trails, greenways, or other designated bicycle routes; and
 - is designed to minimize adverse effects on adjacent landowners.

Signage and Promotion.

The Commission must consult with the DOT to develop signage to be placed along scenic bikeway routes. The Commission must promote the use of scenic bikeways on its website and may develop promotional materials that describe the bikeways and promote economic development in proximity to the bikeways.

Recreational Passes.

Recreational access passes, such as Discover Passes or day-use permits, are not required in order to use a designated scenic bikeway. However, recreational access pass requirements do apply to motor vehicles used to park or operate on any portion of a scenic bikeway located on a recreational site or lands.

Sponsorships.

The Commission may enter into sponsorship agreements with nonprofit entities or private businesses or entities for sponsorship signs to be displayed on designated scenic bikeways or portions of designated scenic bikeways. The Commission may establish the cost for entering into a sponsor agreement. Signage erected pursuant to a sponsorship agreement must be consistent with criteria established by the Commission relating to size, materials, colors, wording, and location. The nonprofit entity or private business or entity must pay all costs of a display, including development, construction, installation, operation, maintenance, and removal costs. Proceeds from the sponsorship agreements must be used to fund Commission activities related to the scenic bikeways program.

Rulemaking.

The commission may adopt rules to administer the scenic bikeways program.

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 would give many more people the opportunity to experience the beauty of Washington. It is modeled on a successful program from Oregon. The intention for this bill is that Washington businesses located along the routes would benefit economically from increased tourism. Businesses would also have the opportunity to pay for sponsorships which would help the Commission fund the program.

Bicycle tourism brings new business to places that may not normally see tourism revenue. Bicycle tourism economy comes to a community in several ways. There are cycling events such as races, recreation, and bicycle touring such as self-supported tours and supported tours. Bicycle tours bring significant income to Washington all throughout the state. Oregon is outpacing Washington in bicycle tourism due to their scenic bikeways program and marketing. Many communities already have the businesses necessary to support bicycle tourism, such as coffee shops, restaurants, and bike shops.

Bicycle tourism brings positive economic impacts to communities, but it also benefits the health and well being of individuals. This bill emphasizes completing existing trails and bikeways; this is important because it improves the experience for users and will encourage more use.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Oregon has a great program on which Washington can model its program. A dedicated position may be required to implement and manage the program, including organizing public feedback, coordinating among agencies, and developing informational

materials among other duties. The Commission already actively engages the public on relevant issues and this program would be a good fit for the Commission. The bill also creates an economic development tool for communities, including rural communities. The Commission manages trails which could become part of the scenic bikeways system.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Ramel, prime sponsor; Todd Starnes, Bicycle Adventures; and Alex Alston, Washington Bikes.

(Other) Owen Rowe, Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.