

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6500

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 9, 1998

Title: An act relating to a scenic byways designation program.

Brief Description: Creating a scenic byways designation program.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen and Wood.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/9/98 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prince, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Goings, Haugen, Horn, Jacobsen, Morton, Oke, Patterson and Prentice.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Benton, Vice Chair.

Staff: Ashley Probart (786-7319)

Background: The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) established a national "scenic byways" grant program. A federal requirement provides that all routes nominated as scenic byways must be officially designated by a state process. Currently only state highways with the designation "scenic and recreational highway" are eligible to compete for federal funding and recognition under the national program. Current law directs the Department of Transportation to develop a scenic and recreational highways program that may identify entire highway loops or similar tourist routes that could be developed to promote tourist activity while protecting the scenic and recreational quality surrounding state highways.

The Department of Transportation report, "Defining Washington's Heritage Corridors Program," prepared in cooperation with the Legislative Transportation Committee, and state and county officials, was completed in January 1995. This report contains recommendations for the management of a statewide scenic byways program and is the basis for this legislation.

Summary of Bill: A "scenic byway" designation program is created. The authority for designation and removal of a scenic byway designation is the responsibility of the Transportation Commission. Byways so designated do not become part of the scenic and recreational highway system unless approved by the Legislature. Participation in this program is voluntary.

If the scenic byway is not a state highway, all costs of designation are borne by the nominating entity.

By December 31, 1998, assessment criteria, a nomination process and removal procedures for scenic byways and local and regional byways must be developed by the Department of Transportation in consultation with affected state agencies, local governments, local planning organizations and special interest groups.

The Department of Transportation must develop a scenic byway management plan for a state highway nominated as a byway. Local, regional or other governmental entities must develop a scenic byway management plan for nominated byways under their jurisdiction.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The creation of a designated scenic byway program is beneficial to local jurisdictions, agencies, and the Department of Transportation. The program will help secure grant funds and support efforts to identify local scenic byways.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Robert Grush, King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission; Jim Cummins, Stevens Pass Greenway; Paula Hammond, Washington State Department of Transportation; John Marshall.