

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6552

As Reported By House Committee On:
Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to parks and recreation in the west slope of the Cascade foothills.

Brief Description: Studying recreational opportunities available in the west slope of the Cascade foothills.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Oke, Kohl-Welles, Fraser and Spanel).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/22/00, 2/23/00 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Directs the Parks and Recreation Commission to review and make recommendations regarding outdoor recreational facilities in the western slope of the Cascade foothills.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Buck, Republican Co-Chair; Regala, Democratic Co-Chair; Anderson, Democratic Vice Chair; Doumit; Eickmeyer; Ericksen and Stensen.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Sump, Republican Vice Chair; G. Chandler; Clements and Pennington.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

Increasing population in the state places more demands upon outdoor recreational opportunities. Much of the increased demand occurs in the western slope of the Cascade foothills.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission is directed to review and make recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor on the existing and future outdoor recreational needs and opportunities in the western slope of the Cascade foothills.

The geographical area of the Cascade foothills is generally defined as the non-urbanized area within the Cascade mountain range and drainages lying between 300 and 3,000 feet above mean sea level, and located within Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King, Pierce, and Thurston counties. Lands located in lower elevations in the immediate vicinity of the foothills area are also included. The definition is solely intended to provide guidance to the commission on the scope of the study.

The study must examine the existing recreational demand for this region, and the projected recreational demand for this region over the next 20 years. In examining the demand for the region, the commission must use the recreational demand of the population residing within a one-hour driving time from these foothills. The study must also include the types of recreational uses demanded, who the recreational users are, and the developed facilities necessary to serve the uses.

In addition, the commission must inventory existing facilities and lands accessible for recreation within the area, review the role of public education to avoid land damage by recreational users, review who provides existing outdoor recreational opportunities and how they coordinate efforts to meet public demand, review state lands within the region that may be managed principally or in part for outdoor recreation uses as a unit of an area state park, and include recommendations for transitioning such lands into state park management. The commission must also compile materials available without cost of existing wildlife and conservation functions and values which could be used to evaluate the compatibility of proposed recreational uses and activities. Finally, the commission must develop recommendations for coordination between public and private outdoor recreation providers to promote expanded outdoor recreational opportunities, and methods to fund outdoor recreational programs and facilities for the region.

In conducting the study, the commission must consult with counties and cities located within the Cascade foothills area, public and private land managers providing outdoor recreational opportunities to the public, and organizations having an interest in the management, conservation, and use of public lands in these foothills. The commission may accept contributions or services to assist in conducting the study.

The commission must provide its report and recommendations regarding projected use, existing facilities, and lands accessible for recreational use within nine months after having received \$100,000 by appropriation or contribution. The final report must include recommendations pertaining to coordination of efforts among recreation providers and methods to fund recreational programs and facilities. The final report is due by July 1, 2002.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The date for the commission to make its recommendations is moved back. Recommendations concerning coordination of efforts and funding may be submitted later than the other required recommendations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on April 15, 2000.

Testimony For: (Original bill) This region has great potential for outdoor recreation. The demand for outdoor recreation is greatly increasing at the same time that the number of trails is decreasing. This study looks at what we have, and how we should best use it. Recreational users generate a lot of money in fuel tax and sales tax.

(Neutral) This is a large task that must be done in a short time. The study can't be done without adequate resources.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jim King, Coalition for Parks and Recreation; Ron Shultz, Washington Audubon Society; and Craig Engleking, Washington Trails Association.

(Neutral) Rex Derr, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.