

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5827

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Economic Development, March 5, 2003

Title: An act relating to national and international tourism.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington state tourism center.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Benton, T. Sheldon, B. Sheldon, Schmidt, Rossi, Hale, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Hargrove, Keiser, Brown, Franklin, Prentice and Thibaudeau.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Economic Development: 2/26/03, 3/5/03 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5827 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators T. Sheldon, Chair; Zarelli, Vice Chair; Benton, Hale, Kohl-Welles; Rossi, Schmidt, B. Sheldon and Shin.

Staff: Alison Mendiola-Hamilton (786-7576)

Background: Promoting tourism can provide Washington residents with jobs, local communities with needed revenues, and create a potential for future national and international investments in the state.

The Business and Tourism Development Unit within the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development promotes Washington State tourism.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Washington State Tourism Center is created. The center provides targeted assistance to national and international tourism-related businesses to promote Washington as a tourism destination and coordinates with local tourism development efforts.

Local governments may divert a portion of the revenue collected on the hotel-motel tax to promote tourism through the center.

The center must solicit financial contributions and support from the private sector, foundations, tribal governments, and enterprises to promote tourism nationally and internationally. The center may expend private dollars to give and receive gifts, grants, and endowments.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill asks for no state funding, but local governments can contribute funds from their hotel-motel tax revenue if they choose. The tourism center will be able to accept private funding, like from tribes. Tribes would like to be part of the effort in promoting tourism nationally and internationally. Concerns: While it's a great idea to enhance tourism efforts, we should be cautious in allowing local governments to divert a portion of their revenue in a time of limited resources.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Shin, prime sponsor (pro); T.K. Bentler, WA State Hotel Lodging Assn. (concerns); Becky Bogard, WA Assn. of Convention/Visitors Bureaus (concerns); Randy Scott, Colville and Quinault Tribes (pro).