
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5219

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2007 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation
(originally sponsored by Senator Jacobsen)

READ FIRST TIME 02/14/07.

1 AN ACT Relating to the Northwest weather and avalanche center;
2 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the Northwest
5 weather and avalanche center (NWAC) provides valuable forecasting and
6 education services, provides valuable information to the public, and
7 reduces the impacts of adverse mountain weather and avalanches on
8 recreation, industry, and transportation in Washington state. To
9 conduct its forecasts, the NWAC receives information from the forty-two
10 weather stations it maintains or helps to maintain, consults sources of
11 on-the-ground weather observations, and utilizes information from the
12 national weather service. The NWAC provides mountain weather and
13 avalanche information through a public hotline recording and over the
14 internet.

15 The NWAC program, which was initiated in 1975, has been
16 administered by the United States forest service since 1976.
17 Throughout its history, the NWAC has been an interagency funded
18 program, receiving significant funds from state, federal, and private
19 sources. However, the NWAC faces funding shortfalls beginning in 2007

1 and for the foreseeable future, creating the possibility that the NWAC
2 will have to reduce its services or close. It is the intent of the
3 legislature to ensure, in continued cooperation with federal and
4 private sources, that the NWAC receives the resources necessary to
5 continue providing weather and avalanche forecasts for the benefit of
6 Washington state.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The state parks and recreation
8 commission shall invite the United States forest service, the national
9 weather service, and the national park service to cooperatively develop
10 an intergovernmental plan and recommendations that seek to ensure that
11 the Northwest weather and avalanche center program has the resources to
12 continue operating at its current level of service into the future.

13 (2) In developing the plan and recommendations, the state parks and
14 recreation commission shall seek to address issues to include:
15 Administrative control over the Northwest weather and avalanche center
16 program; the physical location of the Northwest weather and avalanche
17 center program; administrative control over the employees, equipment,
18 and facilities of the Northwest weather and avalanche center; and
19 ensuring continued cooperative funding, with equitable contributions
20 from federal, state, local, and private sources, to meet the long-term
21 needs of the Northwest weather and avalanche center.

22 (3) In addition to the government agencies listed in subsection (1)
23 of this section, the state parks and recreation commission and
24 participating agencies may invite the department of transportation, the
25 interagency committee for outdoor recreation, the United States
26 department of transportation, other relevant state and federal
27 entities, and relevant local governments, including counties along the
28 Cascade mountain range, and private organizations to participate in the
29 development of the plan and recommendations.

30 (4) The state parks and recreation commission shall, by December 1,
31 2007, provide an update on the development of the plan and
32 recommendations to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the
33 senate and house of representatives. The state parks and recreation
34 commission shall, by December 1, 2008, provide the final plan and
35 recommendations to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the
36 senate and house of representatives. The state parks and recreation

1 commission shall also provide a copy of the final plan and
2 recommendations to participating public and private entities.

3 (5) The state parks and recreation commission, or any other state
4 agency, may not assume administrative control over the Northwest
5 weather and avalanche center program, its employees, its equipment, or
6 its facilities without specific legislative authorization.

7 (6) This section expires June 30, 2009.

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