
SENATE BILL 5219

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2007 Regular Session

By Senator Jacobsen

Read first time 01/12/2007. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation.

1 AN ACT Relating to the Northwest weather and avalanche center;
2 adding new sections to chapter 79A.05 RCW; creating a new section;
3 providing an effective date; and providing an expiration date.

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

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

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

1 sources. However, the NWAC faces funding shortfalls beginning in 2007
2 and for the foreseeable future, creating the possibility that the NWAC
3 will have to reduce its services or close. It is the intent of the
4 legislature to ensure, in continued cooperation with federal and
5 private sources, that the NWAC receives the resources necessary to
6 continue providing weather and avalanche forecasts for the benefit of
7 Washington state.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 79A.05 RCW
9 to read as follows:

10 (1) The commission shall negotiate with the United States forest
11 service to develop an intergovernmental agreement for the transfer of
12 the Northwest weather and avalanche center program from the United
13 States forest service to the commission. The agreement may provide for
14 cooperative administration over the center, and the forest service and
15 the commission may determine which agency will have administrative
16 control over the employees, equipment, and facilities of the center.
17 The commission shall work to include within the interagency agreement
18 a commitment by both agencies that the center maintain into the future
19 the level of service provided by the center during calendar years 2001
20 through 2006, including:

21 (a) The commission's agreement to seek state funding for not less
22 than fifty percent of the funding necessary to maintain this level of
23 service; and

24 (b) The United States forest service's agreement to seek federal
25 funding for not less than thirty-five percent of the funding necessary
26 to maintain this level of service.

27 (2) The commission shall work with relevant agencies of the federal
28 government, neighboring states, local governments, and private
29 organizations to ensure long-term, interagency funding to support the
30 functions of the Northwest weather and avalanche center.

31 (3) The commission shall, by December 1, 2007, and by December 1,
32 2008, provide an update on the commission's progress in carrying out
33 subsections (1) and (2) of this section to the appropriate policy and
34 fiscal committees of the senate and house of representatives.

35 (4) This section expires June 30, 2009.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 79A.05 RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 The Northwest weather and avalanche center is created within the
4 commission. The purpose of the Northwest weather and avalanche center
5 is to reduce the impacts of adverse mountain weather and avalanches
6 through data collection, forecasting, and education. The Northwest
7 weather and avalanche center shall be administered in cooperation with
8 the United States forest service and pursuant to an intergovernmental
9 agreement between the commission and the United States forest service.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 79A.05 RCW
11 to read as follows:

12 The Northwest weather and avalanche center account is created in
13 the state treasury. All receipts from gifts or grants to the account,
14 or legislative appropriations to the account, must be deposited in the
15 account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation.
16 Expenditures from the account may be used only to carry out the
17 purposes of the Northwest weather and avalanche center.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 3 and 4 of this act take effect
19 July 1, 2009.

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