

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2176

As Passed House:

February 6, 1996

Title: An act relating to eligibility for firearms range account funding.

Brief Description: Changing criteria for eligibility for firearms range account funding.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Representatives Campbell, Smith, McMahan, Pennington, Schoesler and Thompson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Law & Justice: 1/19/96, 1/24/96 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/6/96, 95-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Sheahan, Chairman; Delvin, Vice Chairman; Hickel, Vice Chairman; Dellwo, Ranking Minority Member; Costa, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Carrell; Chappell; Cody; Lambert; McMahan; Morris; Murray; Robertson; Smith; Sterk and Veloria.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background: The firearms range account is part of the state general fund. The account receives \$3 from each new or renewed concealed pistol license. The account may also be funded by gifts or donations.

The money in the range account is administered by the Interagency Council for Outdoor Recreation. Money from the account may be used for grants to public or private firearms ranges. The grants are provided on a matching basis of one-to-one. The match provided by a range may be in cash or in-kind. Grants may be awarded for any of a number of purposes, including purchase and development of land, construction or improvement of range facilities, equipment purchase, safety or environmental improvements, noise abatement, and liability protection.

In order for a private range to be eligible for matching grants from the range account, the range must meet a number of requirements. One requirement is that a range must be open on a regular basis to members of the general public who have concealed pistol or hunting licenses or who are taking firearms safety classes. Another requirement is that the range be a nonprofit organization under both the state law and the federal Internal Revenue Code. Under the federal law, a nonprofit organization generally must be supported solely by its membership fees. Some range facilities have expressed concern that it is difficult to meet both the state requirement for openness to the public and the federal requirement for support solely through membership fees.

Summary of Bill: The eligibility requirements for matching grants from the firearms range account are changed. A range need no longer be a nonprofit organization under the federal Internal Revenue Code. The match requirement for grants is reduced to one-for-two for noise abatement and safety improvement grants, and priority is to be given to such grants by the Interagency Council for Outdoor Recreation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The current requirement for meeting the federal definition serves no purpose. It is impossible for ranges to comply with both laws.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: James Williams, Tacoma Sportsmen's Club and Pierce County Sportsmen's Council (pro).