

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5216

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Ecology & Parks, January 31, 1995
Ways & Means, February 23, 1995

Title: An act relating to the parks and recreation commission.

Brief Description: Creating the parks renewal and stewardship account.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Swecker, C. Anderson, Spanel, McAuliffe, Oke, Drew, Owen, Winsley, Haugen and Kohl; by request of Parks and Recreation Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: ECP: 1/12/95, 1/24/95, 1/31/95 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/22/95, 2/23/95 [DP2S]

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5216 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; C. Anderson, Vice Chair; McAuliffe, Spanel and Swecker.

Staff: Cathy Baker (786-7708)

Background: In 1971 the Legislature created the Trust Land Acquisition Program. This program authorized the State Parks and Recreation Commission to purchase trust lands which are suitable for park purposes from the Department of Natural Resources. There are 50 trust land parcels identified in statute as suitable for these purchases. All but one of the parcels identified in statute have been purchased by State Parks for inclusion in the parks system.

The legislation also established the trust land purchase account. Originally, all monies from park concessions and user fees were deposited into this account, and used to assist State Parks in purchasing trust lands identified for addition to the parks system. In recent years, this account has been increasingly used to fund park operations. The park land trust revolving fund is a non-appropriated fund used by the Department of Natural Resources to purchase property to replace trust lands sold to State Parks.

The 1994 supplemental operating budget directed State Parks to study options for increasing the involvement of nongovernmental organizations in the acquisition, development, and operation of the state parks system. Earlier this year, the Office of Financial Management also directed State Parks to review the way its programs are funded and to recommend appropriate alternatives.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Provisions dealing with the terms and conditions of State Parks' purchase of certain trust lands are modified. The Department of Natural Resources

and State Parks are granted general authority to negotiate these sales at fair market value. The names and descriptions of previously purchased trust land parcels are removed from the statute. Technical changes are made in provisions dealing with administration of the park land trust revolving fund.

The trust land purchase account is eliminated. The parks renewal and stewardship account is created. All receipts from state park user fees, concessions, and leases are deposited into the account. During the 1995-97 biennium, \$18 million must be expended from the account for operation of state parks. Any revenues over \$18 million may be used for capital improvements and stewardship activities.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Expenditures from the parks renewal and stewardship account may be made only after appropriation by the Legislature. An intent section is added. It is the intent of the bill to dedicate State Parks' revenues to park operations and improvements. Park revenues are intended to complement, not supplant, general fund support for the agency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 6, 1995.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 1995.

Testimony For: The bill will help stabilize State Parks' budget by guaranteeing up to \$18 million each biennium for parks operations. It will also help demonstrate to park users and staff that park fees will be returned to parks to support operations and capital improvements.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Cleve Pinnix, Russ Cahill, State Parks & Recreation Commission (pro); Eugene St. John, WPEA.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5216 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; Bauer, Drew, Fraser, Gaspard, Hargrove, Pelz, Quigley, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Sutherland, Winsley and Wojahn.

Staff: Tracy Cox (786-7437)

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: Provisions dealing with the terms and conditions of State Parks' purchase of certain trust lands are modified. The Department of Natural Resources and State Parks are granted general authority to negotiate these sales at fair market value. The names and descriptions of previously purchased trust land parcels are removed from the statute. Technical changes are made in provisions dealing with administration of the park land trust revolving fund.

The trust land purchase account is eliminated. The parks renewal and stewardship account is created. All receipts from state park user fees, concessions, and leases are deposited into the account. Expenditures from the account may be used for operating state parks, developing and renovating park facilities, undertaking deferred maintenance, enhancing park stewardship, and other state park purposes.

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The requirement that \$18 million from the new account be used for park operations is deleted. It is clarified that the account can be used for park-related purposes.

Testimony For: The Parks and Recreation Commission has had to cut services and raise fees in the recent past. This bill will help them hold onto the money they get. If park users know the fees go to park uses, they will pay more and the staff will be encouraged to collect more fees. Six percent of park users pay 35 percent of the Park's budget.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Bob Petersen, Russ Cahill, State Parks and Recreation Commission.