

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5303

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, February 18, 1997

Title: An act relating to the creation of a task force on tourism promotion and development.

Brief Description: Creating a task force on tourism promotion and development.

Sponsors: Senators Sellar, Snyder, Anderson, Wojahn, McAuliffe, Kohl, Deccio and Schow.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 2/11/97, 2/18/97 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5303 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Schow, Chair; Horn, Vice Chair; Anderson, Franklin, Fraser, Heavey and Newhouse.

Staff: Aurora Almeda (786-7488)

Background: Recent studies by the Tourism Division of the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development indicate increased growth of the state tourism industry. Members of the tourism industry have expressed the need for a mechanism to coordinate the public and private efforts of tourism promotion and development.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A task force on tourism is created to study tourism promotion and related issues in Washington. The task force consists of nine members from the private sector, four members from the public sector, and three ex-officio members. Private sector members are appointed by the Governor based on recommendations from the major tourism industry associations. Two members respectively from the House of Representatives and the Senate are selected by the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House. Ex-officio members are represented by the Tourism Division, the state Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Attorney General's Office.

The task force may establish working groups to focus on specific issues, and prescribe rules of procedures for itself and its working groups. The task force must cooperate with legislative committees, executive agencies, and private organizations within the tourism industry.

The task force must prepare a proposal for establishing a private commission to market the tourism advantages of Washington. The proposal must: (1) evaluate existing state laws, policies and programs that promote or affect marketing of state tourism; (2) determine the level of state interdepartmental cooperation needed to develop an effective tourism program; (3) determine the economic impact to the state from an aggressive tourism marketing

program; (4) develop a legislatively established statewide tourism commission; (5) propose a plan of funding from private sources of a working budget for the commission; (6) outline the procedures for a tourism marketing plan that addresses the relationship of the proposed commission to the state, other states, and other nations; (7) recommend the appropriate roles and responsibilities of the private and public sectors; and (8) define the interrelationship between the tourism division and the proposed commission.

Members of the task force serve without additional compensation, but must be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while attending sessions or meetings of the task force. Reimbursement of members' travel expenses is through vouchers drawn on funds appropriated generally by the Legislature or upon special appropriation provided by the Legislature.

Staff support is provided by the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development.

The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by January 31, 1998.

The act expires June 30, 1998.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Adding man-made attractions includes many other tourism sites and events, such as wineries and festivals, that are not covered by the categories natural beauty or scenic attractions. The task force is given flexibility to determine the type of tourism commission that the Legislature should establish.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 5, 1997.

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

Testimony For: There is a need for legislative leadership, and a unified effort to promote and develop tourism in Washington. Although recent reports by the Tourism Division of WCTED indicate that the tourism industry in our state has experienced steady growth over the past five years, promotion of Washington's tourism advantages nationally and internationally is weak in comparison to other states like California and Florida. Such a tourism commission can be patterned after the structure and successful strategies of the Apple Commission. The benefits of a coordinated tourism promotional program include: increased job creation and entrepreneurial opportunities for small businesses; diversification of industries; increased tourism revenue to the state and local jurisdictions; and cross-sectoral employment opportunities for dislocated workers due to declines in local industries, such as fishing and timber.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Sellar, prime sponsor; Senator Kohl; Becky Bogard, WA State Hotel/Motel Association; Scott Taylor, WA Public Ports Association; Victoria Chiechi Hinze, WA Wine Institute.