

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6149

As of March 26, 2001

Title: An act relating to siting and operation of a less restrictive alternative treatment facility on McNeil Island.

Brief Description: Providing for siting and operation of a less restrictive alternative treatment facility on McNeil Island.

Sponsors: Senators Long and Hargrove; by request of Governor Locke; Attorney General.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 3/28/01.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Fara Daun (786-7459)

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is required by its constitutional and statutory duty as well as by court order to find less restrictive alternative placements for persons civilly committed to the Special Commitment Center who have progressed in treatment to the point that they no longer need a total confinement setting. Lack of appropriate housing in the community and opposition to this sub-population of sex offenders has presented a barrier to the release to a less restrictive alternative setting for some of the committed persons. As the commitment center continues to operate and treat committed persons, this barrier would increase without the state's assistance in creating appropriate housing. Consequently, DSHS has attempted, without success, to site three-bed units in the community while requesting funds from the Legislature for a larger 36-bed facility which would normally be a step toward conditional release to a three-bed facility.

Summary of Bill: DSHS is authorized to site and operate a 36-bed facility on McNeil Island to house persons conditionally released to a less restrictive alternative. To the extent that siting the facility conflicts with local comprehensive plans or development regulations, the plans and regulations are preempted and superceded with regard to this facility until December 31, 2003.

The state's authority to site an essential public facility in conformance with comprehensive plans and development regulations is not affected and with the exception of this facility, state agencies must comply with those plans and regulations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 16, 2001.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.