

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5376

As of February 20, 2011

Title: An act relating to disposal of lands by natural resource agencies.

Brief Description: Regarding the disposal of lands by natural resource agencies.

Sponsors: Senators Morton, Swecker, Schoesler, Parlette and Stevens.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Marine Waters: 2/02/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & MARINE WATERS

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: The Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) are charged with managing the public lands of the state. The WDFW owns or manages nearly 1 million acres of public land for fish and wildlife, habitat conservation, and wildlife-related recreation. The DNR protects and manages 5.6 million acres of state-owned land. In addition, the Washington state park system includes 120 developed parks.

Summary of Bill: DNR, WDFW, and State Parks must identify and list property that is no longer required for their department purposes. The agencies must sell the identified properties by November 1, 2012. The monies received from the property sales must be deposited into the appropriate agency account and used for maintenance and operation of department lands.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill addresses a key issue and that is how we develop and continue to provide funding to maintain our state lands. Selling off some of the assets to meet a cash flow problem may help us get through these tough times.

CON: Most lands owned or managed under DNR are state trust lands that have a fiduciary responsibility to their beneficiaries. One of the responsibilities for state trust lands is to maintain the trust land base by reinvesting. This bill is inconsistent with our trust land statutes.

OTHER: WDFW has identified 87 properties that could be sold. It is an on-going process and, to date, we have disposed of 11 properties. WDFW receives federal grant funding and the requirements of this funding are to replace the land. The public bid process to dispose of land is costly.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jack Field, Washington Cattlemen's Association.

CON: Clay Sprague, DNR.

OTHER: Jennifer Quan, WDFW.