

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1877

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks*

Title: An act relating to natural resource management research.

Brief Description: Creating the Olympic natural resources center.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Hargrove, Belcher, Jones, Phillips, Jacobsen, Sheldon, Basich and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks, March 4, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1877 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 10 members: Representatives Belcher, Chair; Scott, Vice Chair; Beck, Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dellwo; Fraser; Hargrove; Morton; Sheldon; and Wynne.

Staff: Randy Acker (786-7129).

Background: The Commission on Old Growth Alternatives for Washington's Forest Trust Lands which was created in June 1988 by the Commissioner of Public Lands recommended creation of an Olympic Natural Resources Center. As envisioned by the commission, the purpose of the center would be to develop research and educational programs to support management of natural resources for both the production of commodities and the maintenance of ecological values.

During the 1989 session, the Legislature enacted SSB 5911 largely in response to concerns about emerging issues related to timber supply and old growth management. At the same time there was also considerable interest and concern about the impact that exploration for oil off the Washington coast might have on coastal resources. These concerns, in combination with others about the relationship of fisheries habitat, water quality, and timber management prompted the

creation of the Olympic Institute for Old Growth Forest and Ocean Research and Education in SSB 5911.

The institute is to be located on the west side of the Olympic Peninsula and operated by the University of Washington, with joint support from the College of Forest Resources and the College of Ocean and Fishery Science.

The purpose of the institute is to demonstrate innovative management methods which integrate environmental and economic interests into pragmatic management of forest and ocean resources. The institute is to combine research and educational opportunities with experimental forestry, oceans management, and traditional management knowledge.

The University of Washington was directed to develop a plan for the institute, based on recommendations of the Old Growth Commission.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The name of the Olympic Institute is changed to the Olympic Natural Resources Center. In developing programs, the center is directed to include research and education on a broad range of ocean resource problems, on forest resource management issues, and on interactions between marine, aquatic, and terrestrial ecosystems. The center is also directed to provide a neutral forum where conflicts can be addressed and resolved and to provide a range of educational opportunities.

The center is to operate under the authority of the University of Washington. A scientific or technical committee is to be appointed by the director of the center and a policy advisory board is to be appointed by the governor.

The sum of \$985,000 from the General Fund State is appropriated to the University of Washington for operating expenses. The sum of \$5,675,000 from the State Building and Construction Account is appropriated to the university for capital costs.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill lists the kinds of programs that are to be developed by the center. It specifies that the policy advisory board is to be appointed by the governor; the original bill did not provide a mechanism for appointments to the board.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 21, 1991.

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

Appropriation: Yes.

Testimony For: This is in response to the direction of the Legislature in SSB 5911 and the direction provided by the Commission on Old Growth Alternatives. It is very important to look at the long term benefits of the forests to the state and to find ways of assuring that those benefits are maintained. The center is an important step forward in solving some of the problems faced by resource dependent communities. It provides a way to deal with commodity production and maintenance of ecological values.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: David Thorud, University of Washington; Gordon Smith, University of Washington; Louie Echols, University of Washington; Pat McElroy, Department of Natural Resources; Bert Paul, Forks Economic Development Council; Diane Ellison, private citizen; and Maury Claeys, Chair, Commission on Old Growth Alternatives.