

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1076

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Ecology & Parks, March 28, 1995

Title: An act relating to changing interagency committee for outdoor recreation accounts and accounting procedures.

Brief Description: Revising account names and accounting procedures of the IAC.

Sponsors: House Committee on Capital Budget (originally sponsored by Representatives Sehlin and Ogden; by request of Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ecology & Parks: 3/23/95, 3/28/95 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Cathy Baker (786-7708)

Background: The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) administers several programs that provide grants to state and local agencies for outdoor recreation and habitat conservation projects. The IAC was originally created in 1964 to implement the Initiative 215 Boating Facilities Program (I-215). Since 1964, the IAC has gained responsibility for managing other capital grant programs, including the Non-Highway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA), and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).

Currently, many of the capital grant programs within the IAC are managed through one account, the Outdoor Recreation Account (ORA). The ORA receives revenue from a number of sources, including a portion of the state gas tax paid by boat and off-road vehicle users, off-road vehicle permit fees, and the sale of general obligation bonds. These distinct revenue sources, each of which corresponds to one of the IAC grant programs, must be accounted for separately by the IAC within the ORA. Agencies requesting funding from one of the grant programs within the ORA must submit a six-year facility plan to the IAC for evaluation.

The amount of gas tax revenue deposited in the ORA for the I-215 grant program is determined by a survey of boat users conducted by the Department of Licensing (DOL). If a survey results in a change in the amount of gas tax attributed to boat users, DOL must adjust the revenues deposited into the ORA on a retroactive basis, to the mid-point of the survey period.

I-215 capital grants are divided equally between state and local government boating-related projects. Currently, the IAC allocates I-215 grants to local governments through a competitive application process, while state agencies receive I-215 grants directly through capital budget appropriations based on IAC recommendations.

Summary of Bill: Two new accounts are created in the state treasury for the purpose of segregating IAC grant programs and revenues for accounting purposes. A new Recreation Resource Account is created to receive revenues from a portion of the state gas tax paid by boat users, and to fund grants to state and local governments for boating-related recreation projects. A new Non-Highway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program Account (NOVA Account) is created to receive revenues from a portion of the state gas tax paid by off-road vehicle users and from off-road vehicle permit fees, and to fund grants to public agencies for off-road and non-highway facilities and activities.

The Outdoor Recreation Account is retained in the state treasury to receive state and federal revenues for outdoor recreation and habitat projects including the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).

The requirement that agencies submit a six-year facility plan to the IAC is changed. Agencies must instead submit a long-term facility plan in order to qualify for IAC grant funding.

The effective date of gas tax surveys conducted by the Department of Licensing to determine revenues for the I-215 program is changed. Instead of becoming effective retroactively, survey results will become effective in the biennium following the survey.

The process for allocating I-215 funding to state agencies is changed. The state agency portion of I-215 funding is appropriated to the IAC instead of directly to state agencies. State agencies are eligible to compete for I-215 grants from the IAC. The IAC must submit a list of prioritized state agency projects to be funded under the I-215 program with its biennial budget request.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill will help improve efficiency and accountability in administering IAC grant funds.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Laura Eckert, Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (pro).