

SENATE BILL REPORT

HJM 4029

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, February 20, 1998

Brief Description: Regarding the Olympic National Park as a Biosphere Reserve within the Man and Biosphere Program.

Sponsors: Representatives Buck, Schoesler, Pennington, Honeyford, Carrell, Radcliff, Benson, D. Schmidt, Koster and Sump.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 2/20/98 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Morton, Snyder and Swecker.

Staff: Paul Mabrey (786-7412)

Background: In 1970, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) established the "Man and the Biosphere" program. The program allows for the creation of "biosphere reserves." According to the U.S. Department of State, the main functions of biosphere reserves are conservation of important biological resources; development of environmentally sound economic growth; support of environmental research, monitoring, education, and training; and as a framework to accomplish these three things. More than 300 biosphere reserves have been established in more than 80 countries.

In the United States, the U.S. National Committee for the Man and the Biosphere Program administers the U.S. version of this program. The committee is comprised of representatives from several federal agencies, from U.S. universities, and from private sector organizations. There are 47 designated biosphere reserves in the United States.

In order to become an internationally-recognized biosphere reserve, a federal, state, or local agency or an organization or individual person must complete a nomination form and submit the nomination to the U.S. National Committee. The committee then evaluates the nominated area for inclusion as a biosphere reserve. If the committee approves the idea, the committee forwards the nomination to UNESCO. If that office approves the nomination, it issues the official international biosphere reserve designation. Legislative approval at the state or congressional level is not required in order for a U.S. site to be designated a biosphere reserve.

In 1976, Olympic National Park was designated a biosphere reserve. The office of the superintendent of the park initiated the nomination process.

Summary of Bill: The memorial notes that the land in Washington included in a biosphere reserve was not included at the request of or with the consent of the Legislature and asserts that a request from the National Park Service should not be adequate to nominate land in the state as a biosphere reserve. The Legislature states that it is unalterably opposed to the inclusion of any lands in the state in a biodiversity treaty or any biodiversity program without the express consent of the Legislature. The Legislature also urges Congress, and especially the Washington delegation, to oppose the inclusion of any land in the state in any United Nations biosphere program without the express consent of the Legislature in the form of enacted legislation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: When the Man and Biosphere program designated the Olympic National Park as a biosphere reserve, there were little or no strings attached. In 1997, resolutions were introduced in the U.S. Congress that would establish core, buffer, and transition areas and would conceivably impose land use management requirements on the reserve. This sort of regulatory imposition on Washington State land without the advice and consent of the Legislature is unacceptable.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Rep. Jim Buck, prime sponsor (pro).