

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 6655

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### PARTIAL VETO

C 344 L 98

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Changing the Spokane intercollegiate research and technology institute.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators West and Brown).

**Senate Committee on Higher Education**

**House Committee on Higher Education**

**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** In 1988, the Legislature appropriated \$800,000 for the purchase of a site in Spokane for an intercollegiate institute for research and technology. In 1989, the Legislature created the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute (SIRTI) designed as a cooperative venture of Eastern Washington University (EWU), Gonzaga University, Whitworth College, the community colleges of Spokane, and Washington State University (WSU). Through SIRTI, the member institutions collaborate in the offering of education and training, applied and developmental research, and business resource and support that is specifically aimed at the economic development of the Spokane area. A \$15 million, five-year grant through the federal Advanced Research Project Agency allowed SIRTI to launch and operate programs in manufacturing, health care/biomedical, and environmental technologies.

The education and economic development needs of Spokane are again under discussion in the Legislature, with the viability of SIRTI as an important component of that discussion.

**Summary:** Washington State University, through the operation of its Spokane branch campus, is made responsible for ensuring the expansion of upper-division and graduate higher education programs in Spokane. Eastern Washington University is no longer collocated in Cheney and Spokane. The president of a public four-year institution is provided housing or a housing allowance only when residing in the location where the institution is designated in statute. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is directed to adopt program review rules that avoid duplication and encourage collaboration between WSU and EWU in the delivery of upper-division and graduate level programs in Spokane. Several assessments and plans will be delivered to the HECB and to the appropriate legislative committees.

The Joint Center for Higher Education (JCHE) is eliminated. The authority to approve program offerings rests with the HECB.

All of the assets at the Riverpoint Higher Education Park, with the exception of the real property designated as belonging to the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology

Institute, are transferred to WSU. Parking fees at Riverpoint are made the responsibility of the regents of WSU.

SIRTI is separated from the administration and oversight of JCHE. The SIRTI building and other assets are transferred from JCHE to SIRTI. The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED) is made responsible for contracting with SIRTI for the expenditure of state-appropriated funds for the operation of the institute. The mission of SIRTI continues to be the performance and commercialization of research that benefits the economic vitality of eastern Washington and the Spokane area.

SIRTI continues to be operated as a multi-institutional education and research center. WSU is made the senior research partner. Research staff are provided from among the cooperating institutions through cooperative agreements. Non-state support for research activities is emphasized including the receipt of federal funds and private gifts or grants. Staff for SIRTI are employees of SIRTI. The HECB must approve the establishment of education programs and any facility acquisition.

SIRTI administration is by a board of directors including nine members representing the general public, at least six of whom have broad business experience and an understanding of high technology, the Executive Director of the Washington Technology Institute, the Provost of Washington State University, the Provost of Eastern Washington University, the Provost of Central Washington University, the Provost of the University of Washington, an academic representative of the Spokane community colleges, and one member each representing Gonzaga University and Whitworth College.

Duties of the board of directors are defined:

- Developing operating policies;
- Appointing an executive director;
- Approving the annual operating budget of SIRTI;
- Establishing research priorities and guaranteeing the greatest potential return on the investment;
- Approving and allocating funding;
- Developing, in cooperation with DCTED, a biennial work plan and five-year strategic plan consistent with statewide technology development and commercialization goals;
- Coordinating the work of all collaborating institutions;
- Assisting DCTED in the development of state policies regarding science and technology;
- Reviewing annual reports on funded research projects;
- Providing an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature; and
- Submitting an annual report to DCTED.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	47	0
House	64	30 (House amended)
Senate	27	21 (Senate concurred)

**Effective:** April 3, 1998 (Section 2)  
June 11, 1998

**Partial Veto Summary:** EWU will remain collocated in Spokane and Cheney.