

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

SSB 6552

Title: An act relating to parks and recreation in the west slope of the Cascade foothills.

Brief Description: Studying recreational opportunities available in the west slope of the Cascade foothills.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Oke, Kohl-Welles, Fraser and Spanel.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Meeting Date: February 22, 2000.

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Bill Lynch, Counsel (786-7092)

Background:

Increasing population in the state places more demands upon outdoor recreation opportunities. Much of the increased demand occurs in the western slope of the Cascade foothills.

Summary of Bill:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission is directed to review and make recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor on the existing and future outdoor recreational needs and opportunities in the west slope Cascade foothills.

The geographical area of the Cascade foothills is generally defined as the nonurbanized area within the Cascade mountain range and drainages lying between 300 and 3000 feet above mean sea level, and located within Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King, Pierce, and Thurston counties. Lands located in lower elevations in the immediate vicinity of the foothills area are also included. The definition is solely intended to provide guidance to the commission on the scope of the study.

The study must examine the existing recreational demand for this region, and the projected recreational demand for this region over the next 20 years. In examining the demand for the region, the commission must use the recreational demand of the population residing within a one-hour driving time from these foothills. The study must also include the types of recreational uses demanded, who the recreational users are, and the developed facilities necessary to serve the uses.

In addition, the commission must inventory existing facilities and lands accessible for recreation within the area, review the role of public education to avoid land damage by recreational users, review who provides existing outdoor recreational opportunities and how they coordinate efforts to meet public demand, and review state lands within the region that may be managed principally or in part for outdoor recreation uses as a unit of an area state park, and include recommendations for transitioning into such management. The commission must also compile materials available without cost of existing wildlife and conservation functions and values which could be used to evaluate the compatibility of proposed recreational uses and activities. Finally, the commission must develop recommendations for coordination between public and private outdoor recreation providers to promote expanded outdoor recreation opportunities, and methods to fund outdoor recreation programs and facilities for the region.

In conducting the study, the commission must consult with counties and cities located within the Cascade foothills area, public and private land managers providing outdoor recreation opportunities to the public, and organizations having an interest in the management, conservation, and use of public lands in these foothills. The commission may accept contributions or services to assist in conducting the study.

The commission must provide its report and recommendations by December 15, 2000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on April 15, 2000.

Senate Passage: 2/15/00, 48-0.