

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5660

As of February 15, 2017

Title: An act relating to removing references to specific nonoperational historical facilities from state statute.

Brief Description: Removing references to specific nonoperational historical facilities from state statute.

Sponsors: Senators Hunt, Becker and Darneille; by request of Washington State Historical Society.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government: 2/15/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the Center for Columbia River History.
- Renames the State Capital Historical Museum (Museum) as the historic Lord Mansion.
- Removes the requirement that the Museum be used to house the collections of the Washington State Historical Society.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Staff: Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

Background: Washington State Historical Society (WSHS). WSHS was founded in 1891 and is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization recognized in statute as the trustee of the state to preserve and exhibit materials that demonstrate Washington's cultural, artistic, and natural history. The governing board of WSHS includes seven public officials, the Governor, Secretary of State, Superintendent of Public Instruction and four Legislators who serve ex officio. The board appoints its respective director with the consent of the Governor.

Vancouver National Historic Reserve (Reserve). The Reserve was created by Congress in 1996. The Reserve includes Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Vancouver Barracks, Pearson Air Museum, Pearson Airfield, Officers Row, and a section of the Columbia River

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waterfront. The Reserve is managed by a partnership composed of the National Park Service, the United States Army, the state of Washington, and the city of Vancouver. In 2007, the Legislature identified the WSHS as the state's designated partner representative for the Reserve and directed them to:

- participate in coordination meetings and in the development of plans and policies associated with the Reserve;
- partner with Washington State University (WSU) and other agencies to manage the Center for Columbia River History;
- develop and submit operating and capital budget requests; and
- to oversee the management of all funds appropriated by the state for the Reserve.

Museum. The museum was created by the Legislature in 1941, naming the Washington State Capital Museum Association (WSCMA) as the trustee of the state responsible for operating the Lord Mansion as a museum to be used for the purposes of housing historical relics, documents and materials owned by the state. In 1993, WSCMA merged with the WSHS to assume oversight of the Museum and Outreach Center located in the historic Lord Mansion.

Summary of Bill: Reserve. The WSHS is not required to partner with WSU and other agencies to manage the Center for Columbia River History.

Museum. The Museum is renamed as the historic Lord Mansion and is no longer required to house the WSHS historical collections.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is a cleanup bill to bring the statute in line with the current practices. The consortium for the Center for Columbia River History was dissolved in 2012 by mutual agreement of the partners due to lack of funding and interest but their work is still preserved and the work with the reserve will remain in statute. The State Capital Museum was closed in 2014 for renovations and since then has remained closed. This bill would allow for the preservation of the Lord Mansion so that we can keep it as part of our history. WSHS cannot have artifacts in the building that is not climate controlled so the amendment would allow for the storage of these artifacts in other facilities while allowing for the continued use of the Lord Mansion.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sam Hunt, Prime Sponsor; Jennifer Kilmer, Director, Washington State Historical Society.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.