

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2601

As Reported by House Committee On:
Housing, Community Development & Veterans

Title: An act relating to the authority of the parks and recreation commission to approve leases.

Brief Description: Concerning the authority of the parks and recreation commission to approve leases.

Sponsors: Representatives Tharinger, Barkis, Leavitt and Ryu; by request of Parks and Recreation Commission.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing, Community Development & Veterans: 1/29/20, 1/31/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the maximum lease term for state park properties from 50 to 80 years.
- Allows the State Parks and Recreation Commission to approve long-term leases with majority approval.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & VETERANS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Morgan, Vice Chair; Jenkin, Ranking Minority Member; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Frame, Johnson, J., Leavitt and Ramel.

Staff: Serena Dolly (786-7150).

Background:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) consists of seven members appointed by the Governor. A majority of Commission members constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Under the Commission's procedural rules, a majority vote of the Commissioners present is required to pass an item brought to vote unless the law requires a unanimous vote. By statute, several Commission decisions require unanimous votes

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

including leases in excess of 20 years, land sales or exchanges, and the disposal of real property to resolve boundary and ownership issues with adjacent landowners.

The Commission has broad authority over the management of state parks, including the power to grant concessions and leases in state parks. Generally, the maximum lease term under current law is 50 years, and any lease of more than 20 years requires a unanimous vote of the Commission.

Summary of Bill:

The maximum lease term for state park properties is increased from 50 to 80 years. Property leases exceeding 20 years require approval of at least four commission members instead of a unanimous vote.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The way state parks are funded and operated has changed dramatically since the recession. The state has a backlog in the development of parks and is facing \$600 million in deferred maintenance at park properties. Public-private partnerships with leases are key. The Commission has a proven history with long-term leases. The Saint Edward Seminary was in terrible shape when a private entity developed a renovation plan. The plan did not pencil out with a 50-year lease, so the Legislature authorized a 62-year lease. The park went from having the largest amount of deferred maintenance to being a tremendous asset for the public to enjoy. There are other partnerships like the Saint Edward Seminary out there. This bill provides a critical tool for the Commission to engage private partners. A unanimous vote is unfair and undemocratic. No other state agency is subject to unanimous votes.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Tharinger, prime sponsor; and Mark Brown and Owen Rowe, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.