

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6252

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As of January 26, 2020

**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:** Senators Van De Wege, Short and Das; by request of Parks and Recreation Commission.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 1/23/20.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Increases the maximum lease term for state parks properties from 50 to 80 years.
- Removes the requirement for unanimous State Parks Commission (Commission) approval of long-term leases and requires approval by at least four of the seven members of the Commission.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Staff:** Jeff Olsen (786-7428)

**Background:** The Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. 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 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. Except for a lease up to 62 years at Saint Edward Park, the maximum lease term under current law is 50 years, and any lease of

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more than 20 years requires a unanimous vote of the Commission. With an affirmative vote of at least five members, the Commission may enter into a lease for up to 62 years for property at Saint Edward Park.

**Summary of Bill:** The maximum lease term for state park properties is increased from 50 to 80 years. The requirement for unanimous approval by Commission members of property leases exceeding 20 years is changed to an approval requiring at least four Commission members.

**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: The State Parks Commission is the only commission with members appointed by the Governor where unanimous approval of a decision is required. The change in the bill will allow the Commission to address opportunities when they arise. Washington State Parks has a \$500 million backlog in maintenance. By entering into public-private partnerships, like at Saint Edward State Park, the state can leverage private funding to restore facilities. The leases are time-bound, the state retains ownership, and the public is able to access facilities. Fort Worden is another example where public-private partnerships have been successful.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Kevin Van De Wege, Prime Sponsor; Owen Rowe, Governmental Affairs Director, State Parks and Recreation Commission.

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