

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1997

As Passed House:
February 9, 2024

Title: An act relating to gubernatorial appointments for the state parks and recreation commission.

Brief Description: Concerning gubernatorial appointments for the state parks and recreation commission.

Sponsors: House Committee on Innovation, Community & Economic Development, & Veterans (originally sponsored by Representatives Ryu, Leavitt, Reed, Kloba, Reeves, Pollet and Davis; by request of Parks and Recreation Commission).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Innovation, Community & Economic Development, & Veterans: 1/17/24, 1/23/24 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/9/24, 95-2.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires that the Governor strive to appoint citizens to the State Parks and Recreation Commission who represent the diversity of Washington, who are from different regions of the state, and to include citizens with a variety of gender, ethnic, racial, tribal, and other lived experiences in Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, & VETERANS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Donaghy, Vice Chair; Rule, Vice

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

Chair; Volz, Ranking Minority Member; Barnard, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Chambers, Christian, Cortes, Paul, Senn, Shavers, Street, Waters and Wilcox.

Staff: Martha Wehling (786-7067).

Background:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) controls and supervises more than 140 state parks throughout Washington. The Commission is made up of seven Washington citizens. Members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate and serve six-year terms. When making Commission appointments, the Governor is required to choose individuals who understand parks and recreation needs and interests.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Three criteria are added for the Governor to consider when making appointments to the Commission. The Governor should strive to choose citizens:

- who are representative of the diversity of Washington;
- who are from different regions of Washington; and
- that include a variety of gender, ethnic, racial, tribal, and other lived experiences in Washington.

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 mission of the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) is to connect all Washingtonians to their natural and cultural heritage. Under current law, appointments to the Commission require understanding of parks and recreation needs and interests. The additional criteria will provide direction to future governors when making Commission appointments to ensure that the Commissioners come from different areas of the state and represent a variety of lived experiences. The diversity of lived experiences strengthens decision-making and helps the public see themselves in the Commission. State Parks worked with Governor Inslee and his staff to have one of the most diverse Commissions in the agency's 110-year history, and the criteria will help maintain that diversity into the future. The language is a policy statement for the Governor, requesting that the criteria be considered; it does not create a private right of action.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Cindy Ryu, prime sponsor; and Owen Rowe, State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.