

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6010

As of January 11, 2024

Title: An act relating to streamlining certain decisions pertaining to the development or extension of a trail or path from the state environmental policy act.

Brief Description: Streamlining certain decisions pertaining to the development or extension of a trail or path from the state environmental policy act.

Sponsors: Senators Shewmake and Liias.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs: 1/11/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides a categorical exemption for decisions pertaining to the development or extension of a trail or path from the State Environmental Policy Act.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LAND USE & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Staff: Maggie Douglas (786-7279)

Background: State Environmental Policy Act. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) establishes a review process for state and local governments to identify environmental impacts that may result from governmental decisions such as the issuance of permits or the adoption of land use plans. The SEPA environmental review process involves a project proponent or the lead agency completing an environmental checklist to identify and evaluate probable environmental impacts. Government decisions that the SEPA checklist process identifies as having significant adverse environmental impacts must then undergo a more comprehensive environmental analysis in the form of an environmental impact statement (EIS). Under SEPA, certain nonproject actions are categorically exempt

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.

from threshold determinations, and EISs in rule. Examples of categorical exemptions include various kinds of minor new construction and minor land use decisions.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): The development or extension of a trail or path are categorically exempted from compliance with SEPA if:

- the surface area of the proposed development or extension of a trail or path does not exceed ten acres; and
- the proposed development or extension of a trail or path is not located in a designated critical area.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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 On Proposed Substitute: PRO: This bill allows short segments of urban area trails that are separated or unconnected to be connected without adding significant costs to the overall project and realize some of the investments made through Move Ahead Washington. The bill provides that the total length of connection may be up to roughly two miles, depending on the width of the trail. We are working with stakeholders to make sure that cultural resources and parking lots are not part of this exemption. Connected trails provides a recreational way for pedestrians, bikers, and rollers to access urban spaces, but this bill also provides trail connection for both urban and rural areas.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sharon Shewmake, Prime Sponsor; Lee Lambert, Washington Bikes; Katherine Hollis, Eastrail Partners; Bryce Yadon, Futurewise .

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