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**SENATE BILL 5095**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Nobles, Lovelett, Cleveland, Hasegawa, Keiser, Lias, Nguyen, Randall, Saldaña, Salomon, Shewmake, Trudeau, Van De Wege, and C. Wilson

Prefiled 12/23/22. Read first time 01/09/23. Referred to Committee on Health & Long Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating the "parks Rx" health and wellness  
2 pilot programs; creating new sections; and providing an expiration  
3 date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that one of the  
6 best and most cost-effective ways for the residents of Washington  
7 state to achieve physical and mental health, and to prevent costly  
8 diseases and conditions such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and  
9 other coronary conditions, is to get regular exercise and physical  
10 activity. In fact, as part of a study done for the recreation and  
11 conservation office on the benefits of trail-based activities, the  
12 University of Washington conducted a literature review of over 100  
13 studies that identified evidence of a close linkage between health  
14 benefits and being outdoors. The literature review further found that  
15 the health benefits of nature "may be particularly impactful for the  
16 12.2 percent who have incomes below the poverty level."

17 (2) The legislature further finds that for all residents, public  
18 parks and trails, recreation programs, and open spaces offer  
19 equitable, no-cost, or low-cost options for all people to be active  
20 and healthy, with these spaces receiving record levels of use during  
21 the COVID-19 pandemic.

1 (3) The legislature finds that it can harness the equitable, low-  
2 cost, or no-cost opportunities provided by parks and recreation  
3 spaces, and build upon successful programs established in areas such  
4 as the East Bay of California and Pittsburgh, and the states of  
5 Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Utah, by establishing a program in  
6 Washington state through which parks and recreation officials, health  
7 care providers, as well as public and community health advocates can  
8 work collaboratively to design a program that will incentivize  
9 residents, particularly those from communities experiencing  
10 inequities or without ready access to physical fitness facilities, to  
11 regularly use public parks and recreation sites, facilities and  
12 programs to enable better physical and mental health outcomes, and  
13 decrease visits to hospitals and clinics.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of health shall create  
15 an advisory committee for the "parks Rx" health and wellness pilot  
16 programs and the membership of the committee shall include  
17 communities that have been historically marginalized in access to  
18 parks.

19 (2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
20 specific purpose, the secretary of health, in collaboration with the  
21 advisory committee for the "parks Rx" health and wellness pilot  
22 programs, shall:

23 (a) Establish a minimum of three pilot programs using the  
24 recommendations from the 2022 department of health task force report  
25 to create an operational program structure and hire staff personnel.  
26 The two-year pilot programs must be located in each of the following  
27 regions of Washington state: Puget Sound, eastern Washington, and  
28 southwest Washington regions;

29 (b) Develop a competitive request for proposal process to select  
30 the pilot programs and begin the process by or before February 1,  
31 2024;

32 (c) Review the pilot program applications and select the pilot  
33 programs by August 1, 2024;

34 (d) Create an evaluation criteria for the request for proposal  
35 process that strongly focuses on:

36 (i) Identifying populations experiencing the greatest health care  
37 disparities;

38 (ii) Forming partnerships with health and wellness providers;

1 (iii) Working with leaders of disadvantaged communities to bring  
2 lived experience perspectives;

3 (iv) Conducting outreach to local governments and organizations  
4 that can provide fitness spaces, trails, community centers, and other  
5 similar facilities for usage; and

6 (v) Developing a data-gathering and measuring system to evaluate  
7 the program's effectiveness and impact on the health and well-being  
8 of individuals and communities;

9 (e) Submit a report to the governor and relevant committees of  
10 the legislature in compliance with RCW 43.01.036 by July 1, 2027. The  
11 report shall contain at a minimum, the following:

12 (i) An assessment of the performance for each pilot program  
13 during the two-year period noting the successes, challenges, and  
14 current gaps within the pilot programs that include measuring  
15 community engagement and identifying current community and  
16 organization partnerships and potential areas of improvement;

17 (ii) An impact assessment of the three-region pilot programs on  
18 community and individual health and well-being, taking into  
19 consideration a review of the different ways individuals may  
20 experience health impacts of being outdoors depending on history,  
21 culture, and other social determinants of health;

22 (iii) An analysis of the pilot program that identifies the  
23 resources and tools needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of  
24 the program including estimates for the appropriate level of  
25 staffing, capital, and operational and maintenance efforts needed for  
26 the program to continue operating; and

27 (iv) Recommendations on potential funding and resource options  
28 that, at minimum, include federal funding opportunities, grants and  
29 loans, corporate and civic donations, as well as state funding, if  
30 necessary.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act expires August 1, 2027.

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