

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1111

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks*

Title: An act relating to community and urban forestry.

Brief Description: Authorizing the department of natural resources to establish a program in community and urban forestry.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Scott, Beck, Belcher, Miller, Bowman, Brumsickle, Winsley, Kremen, Rasmussen, Basich and Nelson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks, February 7, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1111 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 10 members: Representatives Belcher, Chair; Scott, Vice Chair; Beck, Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dellwo; Hargrove; Morton; Riley; Sheldon; and Wynne.

Staff: Randy Acker (786-7129).

Background: The Department of Natural Resources has operated a very limited program in community and urban forestry based on a \$35,000 grant from the U.S. Forest Service. There currently is no statutory direction to the department to run such a program nor has there been any state funding to support efforts in this area. Despite the limited nature of the program, cities and towns have increasingly sought technical assistance from the department as they have worked to retain and enhance urban and community forests.

Washington State's federal grant for community forestry will increase to \$220,000 this year as a result of the recently enacted "America The Beautiful" program. As a condition of the federal grant, the state must develop a community forestry program that includes an advisory council, a volunteer component, a program coordinator, an assessment of

community forestry tree resources, and within three years must provide state matching grants.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A new chapter in law is created establishing the importance of trees in community and urban environments and declaring the need for assistance in establishing, retaining and enhancing community and urban forests.

The Department of Natural Resources is authorized to establish a program in community and urban forestry. The department may advise, encourage, and assist municipalities, counties, and other entities in promoting community and urban forestry. The department may appoint an advisory committee and it may assist municipal and county tree maintenance programs through loans of surplus equipment.

The department is authorized to receive and disperse federal monies, as well as donations from public and private sources.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill makes technical changes and clarifies language from the original bill. The Department of Natural Resources is authorized to advise and assist community and urban forestry programs rather than required to do so as in the original bill.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Urban forests and trees are unique and they require unique management that involves many disciplines. There is a tremendous need for information that brings these disciplines together and makes it readily available to the public and local organizations. In many cases trees and utilities are often in competition but with the right information there is an opportunity to avoid that competition.

This bill can assist and lead education efforts on what to plant, how to plant, and how to care for what is planted.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Stan Biles, Department of Natural Resources; James Clark, University of Washington; John Goodfellow, Puget Power; Jerry Clark, City of Seattle; Don Willeke, National Urban Forest Council and Rex Derr, Mayor of City of Olympia.