

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5225

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES,
JANUARY 31, 1991

Brief Description: Providing for environmental interpretation in state parks.

SPONSORS: Senators Oke and Metcalf.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5225 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Metcalf, Chairman; Oke, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Barr, Conner, Owen, Patterson, Snyder, and Sutherland.

Staff: Gabrielle Horner (786-7717)

Hearing Dates: January 24, 1991; January 31, 1991

BACKGROUND:

The Legislature has declared that state park lands are to be managed to: (1) maintain and enhance ecological, aesthetic, and recreational purposes; (2) preserve and maintain natural and historic resources which may also be used for interpretive purposes; (3) provide recreational opportunities; and (4) encourage public participation in park program development (RCW 43.51.395). Public comments from around the state have encouraged the State Parks and Recreation Commission to increase its environmental interpretative program.

Environmental education programs continue to be in high public demand and are often cited as the best long-range and cost effective methods to minimize human impacts on the environment. The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) predicts "interpretive center visits" to be one of the state's fastest growing recreational activities. The 1991 Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan finds that public education programs are necessary components of long-term management and pollution prevention strategies for Puget Sound.

The primary goal of the Department of Ecology's Environment 2010 project is for a citizenry that is the most environmentally enlightened and responsible in the country. A key recommendation of the 2010 project is for state agencies to provide environmental education opportunities at convenient points of interaction with the public. State park visitors have been indentified as an audience that can gain a better understanding and appreciation of Washington's environment.

SUMMARY:

The State Parks and Recreation Commission is given the authority to provide environmental interpretive activities for visitors to state parks that: (1) explain ecosystems; (2) explain the effect of human behaviors on the environment; and (3) increase citizen appreciation and stewardship of the environment. The commission may consult and enter into agreements with private and governmental entities to conserve and interpret Washington's environment.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

Section 1, the legislative intent, is also added to Chapter 43.51 RCW.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

The bill grants a clear legislative mandate to allow the state Parks and Recreation Commission to increase efforts to educate park visitors about the environments they experience in state parks.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Cleve Pinnix, State Parks (pro)