

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5264

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 14, 1991

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

SPONSORS: Senators Oke, Bailey, Rinehart, Stratton and Bauer.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Hearing Dates: February 15, 1991; February 19, 1991

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

BACKGROUND:

Urban forestry relates to all trees including those in parks, greenbelts, and along streets. Many Washington urban areas have significant forest areas and these need to be managed. Urban forestry improves real estate values, creates better air quality and improves the quality of life. Wildlife is also helped and large wildlife species exist in many urban settings. The urban forest has an effect on tourism and the visual impacts that a city has. The development of greenbelts, urban paths and recreation areas is enhanced by a urban forestry program.

The Department of Natural Resources has supported the growth of community and urban forestry efforts among the cities and towns of Washington with the aid of a \$35,000 federal grant from the USDA Forest Service last biennium. Limited financial assistance for urban forestry projects has been provided to municipalities.

Communities are addressing the impact of growth by establishing community forest programs that seek to maintain the character of their community and the "Evergreen State." Although the department does not have a state funded community and urban forestry program, increasingly, communities are requesting technical assistance.

The department has been asked by local governments to take a leadership role in coordinating the efforts of both the public and private sectors involved in community forestry by providing the technical assistance needed to insure the retention and enhancement of community forests. The

President's tree initiative, "America the Beautiful," has been supported by Congress and Washington State's federal grant for community forestry will increase to approximately \$220,000 for the 1991-93 biennium. As a condition of the federal grant, the department is required to develop a community forestry program that will include an advisory council, a volunteer component, a program coordinator, an assessment of community forestry tree resources, and within three years provide state urban forestry matching funds.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Natural Resources may establish and maintain a community and urban forestry program. The department will advise, encourage and assist municipalities, counties and other public and private entities in the development of community and urban forestry programs.

The department shall support the development of cooperative projects among the public and private sectors that are directed at tree planting, education, research, nursery tree improvement, and urban fishery/wildlife projects, as well as other projects that involve the establishment, maintenance and protection of community and urban forests.

Financial and technical assistance is made available to municipalities, counties and others. The department is authorized to receive and disburse federal monies as well as donations from other public and private sources.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

An excellent program which is needed by urban areas. Substantial ongoing federal funding is available.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Charles Krebs, United States Department of Agriculture; Dr. James Clark, University of Washington; David Flaherty, City of Yakima; John Goodfellow, Puget Sound Power and Light; Laura Eckert, Department of Natural Resources

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

The House striking amendment is the same as the Senate bill with several nonsubstantive technical changes.