
SENATE BILL 5173

State of Washington

56th Legislature

1999 Regular Session

By Senators Jacobsen, Oke and Fraser

Read first time 01/15/1999. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation.

1 AN ACT Relating to a Cascade foothills recreational area study; and
2 creating new sections.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the population of
5 the Puget Sound region will grow by more than one million by the year
6 2010, and that current and new residents will seek greater
7 opportunities for outdoor recreation within a reasonable distance from
8 their homes. Changing demographics, healthier and more active
9 lifestyles, and improvements in recreation technology will all lead to
10 growing public demand for areas and facilities in which to recreate.
11 The western slope Cascade foothills from the international border south
12 through Thurston county provides a wealth of existing and potential
13 outdoor recreation areas that are close to the great majority of the
14 urbanized areas of Puget Sound. Within this area are many public
15 lands, including state park units, that may provide the nucleus for a
16 network of lands accessible for dispersed recreational uses.

17 The legislature further finds that the Cascade foothills are home
18 to many permanent residents who benefit from the natural resource and
19 lifestyle amenities of the foothills, and that expanding recreational

1 opportunities in the foothills must be consistent with the long-term
2 sustainability of the local economies. The west slope foothills also
3 are an integral part of the "mountains to sound" region and provide
4 significant benefits to the entire region, including watershed
5 protection, wildlife habitat, flood damage reduction, and scenic
6 values. A review of outdoor recreational needs and opportunities in
7 the foothills should be consistent with protection of these functions
8 and values.

9 This act has two purposes. The first is to recognize the
10 significant outdoor recreation potential of this area by designating
11 the Cascade foothills recreation area as an area of state-wide
12 importance for its recreational, scenic, natural, and cultural values.
13 The second is to create the Cascade foothills commission to study and
14 make recommendations for creating greater recreational opportunities on
15 public lands within this area, and to promote greater intergovernmental
16 and public and private coordination among managers of outdoor
17 recreation lands and facilities.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
19 throughout sections 3 through 5 of this act unless the context clearly
20 requires otherwise.

21 (1) "Cascade foothills" means the public lands within the Cascade
22 range and drainages lying between five hundred and two thousand feet
23 above mean sea level, and located within the counties of Whatcom,
24 Skagit, Snohomish, King, Pierce, and Thurston. This does not include
25 public lands that are devoted to developed, nonrecreational uses such
26 as buildings, parking lots, and equipment storage facilities.

27 (2) "Commission" means the Cascade foothills commission.

28 (3) "Counties" includes the counties of Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish,
29 King, Pierce, and Thurston.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The legislature hereby designates the
31 "Cascade foothills recreation area," which shall encompass generally
32 the Cascade foothills. The area is designated solely to guide the
33 study responsibilities of the Cascade foothills commission and the
34 state agencies participating in the study.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) There is created the Cascade foothills
2 commission. The commission shall be composed of nineteen members as
3 follows:

4 (a) A total of six members, one being appointed by each of the
5 governing bodies of the six counties comprising the conservation area;

6 (b) The chair of the Washington parks and recreation commission,
7 serving ex officio;

8 (c) The commissioner of public lands, or the commissioner's
9 designee, serving ex officio;

10 (d) The supervisor of the Mt. Baker/Snoqualmie national forest, or
11 such other representative of federal land managing agencies within the
12 foothills area designated by such agencies;

13 (e) Two members of the senate, one from each major caucus,
14 appointed by the president of the senate;

15 (f) Two members of the house of representatives, one from each
16 major caucus, appointed by the co-speakers; and

17 (g) Six members appointed by the governor from the public at large,
18 to provide the commission with a diversity of experience and views
19 regarding recreational uses of public lands in the Cascade foothills.

20 (2) The commission shall review and make recommendations on the
21 existing and future outdoor recreational needs and opportunities in the
22 Cascade foothills, recognizing the important functions and values that
23 are provided by these lands. This shall include wildlife habitat,
24 watershed protection, flood damage protection, scenic enjoyment, and
25 economic uses, as well as the means by which more effective use of
26 existing public lands in the foothills, assisted by willing private
27 providers of outdoor recreation facilities, may serve to meet these
28 needs. To this end the study should include:

29 (a) An assessment of the existing and the twenty-year growth
30 projection for recreational demand of the population residing within
31 one-hour driving time from the Cascade foothills. This assessment
32 shall include the types of recreational uses anticipated, demographic
33 projects of recreational users, and developed facilities needed to
34 serve such uses;

35 (b) An inventory of existing facilities and lands accessible for
36 recreational use within the Cascade foothills;

37 (c) A review of existing local, regional, state, federal, private,
38 and nongovernmental nonprofit entities providing outdoor recreation

1 facilities within the Cascade foothills and their coordination in
2 meeting public outdoor recreation demand;

3 (d) A review of state lands within the Cascade foothills that may
4 be managed principally or in part for outdoor recreation uses as a unit
5 of a Cascade foothills state park, and recommendations for
6 transitioning to such management;

7 (e) An assessment of existing wildlife and conservation functions
8 and values to use in evaluating the potential compatibility of proposed
9 recreational uses and activities;

10 (f) Recommendations for a regional entity to promote expanded
11 outdoor recreation opportunities within the Cascade foothills, in
12 coordination with an expanded state park system within the Cascade
13 foothills; and

14 (g) Methods to fund local, regional, and state outdoor recreation
15 programs and facilities within the Cascade foothills.

16 (3) Using existing staff, the parks and recreation commission and
17 the interagency committee for outdoor recreation shall provide staffing
18 assistance to the commission. In addition, the department of natural
19 resources and counties within the Cascade foothills may offer staffing
20 assistance to the commission. The interagency committee shall make
21 available information from the public lands inventory to assist the
22 commission in identifying public lands within the Cascade foothills.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) In conducting the study in section 4 of
24 this act, the commission shall consult with the governing bodies of the
25 counties and cities within the Cascade foothills area. The commission
26 shall hold its meetings within or in the immediate vicinity of the
27 Cascade foothills. Such meetings shall be open to the public and
28 provide maximum opportunity for public participation.

29 (2) The commission shall provide an initial work plan and budget to
30 the fiscal and parks committees of the senate and house of
31 representatives by October 1, 1999. A final report and recommendations
32 shall be provided no later than December 15, 2000.

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