

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1466

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, March 26, 2003

Title: An act relating to natural science, wildlife, and environmental education.

Brief Description: Promoting environmental, natural science, wildlife, forestry, and agricultural education.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Quall, Tom, Haigh, Talcott, McDermott, Anderson, Linville, Rockefeller, Ericksen, Upthegrove, Jarrett, Dunshee, Nixon, Kessler, Ruderman, Eickmeyer, Cox, Lovick, Hunt, Grant, Woods, Wallace, Pflug, Kenney and Fromhold).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 3/26/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Johnson, Chair; Zarelli, Vice Chair; Carlson, Eide, Finkbeiner, McAuliffe, Rasmussen and Schmidt.

Staff: Heather Lewis-Lechner (786-7448)

Background: Various private entities, such as Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, the Pacific Science Center, the Washington Audubon Society, and Woodland Park Zoo, have educational outreach programs, available to schools. These programs are designed to help children learn about science, wildlife, or the environment in a wide variety of ways including the development of materials for in-class curricula, field trips and out-of-school opportunities as well as teacher training.

Under current Washington law, all schools give instruction in science with special reference to the environment. Specifically, the Washington Administrative Code requires that instruction about conservation, natural resources and the environment be provided at all grade levels and in an interdisciplinary manner.

Summary of Bill: The natural science, wildlife, and environmental education partnership account and grant program are each established. The purpose of the account and of the grant program is to promote proven and innovative natural science, wildlife, and environmental education programs that are fully aligned with the state's essential academic learning requirements (EALRs) and that includes instruction about renewable resources, responsible use of resources, and conservation. The grant program is subject to the availability of funds in the partnership account. The partnership account consists of funds provided by the Legislature or other sources. An appropriation is not required for an expenditure from the account.

Money from the account is disbursed through a competitive grant-making process to nonprofit organizations that are tax exempt under section 501(c) of the federal Internal Revenue Code and that can provide matching funds or in-kind services. The criteria for the grants is established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and any expenditures from the fund must be authorized by SPI or its designee. When determining the funding criteria, SPI involves a cross-section of stakeholder groups and the criteria must be socially, economically, and environmentally balanced. The criteria must be based on compliance with the EALRs, use methods that encourage critical thinking, and programs must meet at least one of the five features listed. A list of non-exclusive, eligible uses for the grants is included.

Grants may not be used for any partisan or political activities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: No one.