

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5219

C 141 L 07
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding the Northwest weather and avalanche center.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senator Jacobsen).

Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation
House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

Background: The Northwest Weather and Avalanche Center (NWAC) provides weather and avalanche forecasts and information for Washington and northern Oregon through phone consultations, public hotline recordings, and the internet. NWAC gathers its mountain weather data from a network that includes direct observers, the National Weather Service, and the 42 weather stations that it maintains or helps to maintain. NWAC forecast staff also present avalanche, weather, and snow safety seminars.

NWAC is currently administered by the United States Forest Service and housed at the National Weather Service office in Seattle. NWAC is funded cooperatively, with contributions from entities including the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, state and local governments, and private organizations.

NWAC's annual budget approaches \$300,000. For 2006, Washington State agencies provided about 45 percent of NWAC's funding. The State Parks and Recreation Commission provided \$89,000, and the Department of Transportation provided \$45,000.

Summary: The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) must invite the United States Forest Service, the National Weather Service, and the National Park Service to develop an intergovernmental plan and recommendations that seek to ensure that the NWAC has the resources to continue operating at its current level of service into the future. The Commission and participating agencies may invite other public and private entities to participate in the development of the plan and recommendations.

In developing the plan and recommendations, the Commission must seek to address issues including administrative control over the NWAC and ensuring cooperative long-term funding for the NWAC.

No state agency may assume administrative control over the NWAC without legislative authorization.

The Commission must provide the Legislature with updates on the status of the plan and recommendations in December 2007 and 2008.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate 46 0

House 98 0

Effective: July 22, 2007