

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5595

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Relations

Title: An act relating to the state nickname.

Brief Description: Adopting the evergreen state as the state nickname.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, J., Rolfes, Holy, Wilson, L., Lovick, Nguyen, Randall, Wilson, C., Valdez, Kuderer, Torres, Pedersen, Dhingra, Lovelett, Padden, Keiser, Muzzall, Short, Robinson, Schoesler, Dozier, Wagoner, Billig, Van De Wege, Warnick, Fortunato, Rivers, Braun, King, Gildon, Boehnke, McCune, Shewmake, Saldaña, Cleveland, Trudeau, Frame, Conway, Hasegawa and Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 3/15/23, 3/22/23 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Designates "The Evergreen State" as the official state nickname.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ramos, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Abbarno, Ranking Minority Member; Christian, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Low and Mena.

Staff: Desiree Omli (786-7105).

Background:

On November 11, 1889, Washington became the forty-second state to enter the Union. In the late 1800's Charles Tallmadge Conover, a pioneer Seattle realtor, newspaper columnist,

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and historian, coined the name "The Evergreen State" as a nickname for Washington in a promotional booklet titled *Washington the Evergreen State and Seattle its Metropolis*. The booklet was aimed at drumming up real estate business and praised the abundant lush evergreen forests that adorns the state. Conover was also instrumental in the movement to retain the name of Mount Rainier. Today "The Evergreen State" is generally accepted as a reference to the State of Washington. The nickname can be seen engraved on Washington license plates, on memorabilia sold at souvenir shops, and inscribed on the April 2007 United States memorial quarter honoring Washington. While many state symbols, including the official state flag, song, dance, and seal have officially been designated as such in statute, no official state nickname has been designated in the same manner.

Evergreen trees have green foliage throughout the year and do not drop their leaves in fall or go dormant in winter like deciduous trees. Washington is home to about 25 native evergreen tree species. A few common types of evergreen trees in Washington are the Western Hemlock, Douglas-Fir, Western Red Cedar, Red Alder, and Pacific Yew.

Summary of Bill:

"The Evergreen State" is designated as the official nickname of the State of Washington. Entities are not required to update or revise any existing materials, documents, or publications.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) People from outside of Washington know this state as The Evergreen State, which is a phrase included on the state's license plate. The nickname was paraded around at the 1893 World Fair in Chicago in an effort to get people to visit Washington. Constituents have spent three years trying to make "The Evergreen State" the official nickname of Washington, but their efforts have not yet been successful. It is time to make "The Evergreen State" Washington's official nickname.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Jeff Wilson, prime sponsor; and Timothy Lonon.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.