

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1020

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As of March 17, 2023

**Title:** An act relating to the state dinosaur.

**Brief Description:** Designating the *Suciasaurus rex* as the official dinosaur of the state of Washington.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Morgan, Callan, Ryu, Simmons, Reed, Gregerson, Thai and Ormsby.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/20/23, 88-5.

**Committee Activity:** State Government & Elections: 3/17/23.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the *Suciasaurus rex* as the Washington State dinosaur.

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

**Staff:** Megan Tudor (786-7478)

**Background:** Mesozoic Era. In a land before time, between approximately 245 and 66 million years ago dinosaurs thrived on Earth. This time was designated as the Mesozoic Era and is divided into three distinct periods; Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous. During the Cretaceous period, between approximately 145 to 66 million years ago, dinosaur diversity increased rapidly to include one of the most well-known theropods, the Tyrannosaurus rex. Theropods are two-legged carnivores such as Tyrannosaurus and Velociraptor that likely paved the way for modern birds.

The *Suciasaurus* and Washington. On April 10, 2012, a dinosaur fossil was discovered by two Burke Museum research associates on the shores of Sucia Island State Park in the San Juan Islands. This fossil was identified as a partial femur bone from a theropod dinosaur that lived approximately 80 million years ago, in the late Cretaceous period. It took almost a year to fully excavate the section of fossil from the surrounding rock and re-attach the

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pieces. The fossil is 16.7 inches long, which the Burke Museum estimates would have been part of a femur measuring more than three feet in length. The area of Sucia Island where the fossil was recovered is from shallow marine rocks of the Cedar District Formation. Presence of fossilized clams lead scientists to estimate the approximate location of where the theropod died to be between Baja California, Mexico, or Northern California. The exact designation of theropod is unknown, yet evidence suggests it may be a species similar to Daspletosaurus. The theropod fossil has been nicknamed the *Suciasaurus rex* in recognition of the island where it was discovered.

Washington is the 37th state to have found a dinosaur fossil. Twelve states and Washington D.C. have designated official state dinosaurs.

**Summary of Bill:** The *Suciasaurus rex* is the state dinosaur of Washington.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: A group of 4th grade students from Elmhurst Elementary contacted the sponsor's office with a proposal based on their research, asking that the *Suciasaurus rex* officially become a state symbol. This bill has run in the past with bipartisan support. It is important to engage students in the civic process and incorporate learning how to connect with decision makers. These students have testified on the bill and stayed interested in its progress since 2020. It is important we show everything we can be proud of that comes from and represents Washington State. This bill has no fiscal impact, would increase tourism, and could help bring dollars back to the state. The *Suciasaurus rex* project taught students about flexibility and research, and shows that hard work can pay off. Students were able to meet with and learn directly from the Burke Museum as part of this process. The passage of this bill will show other people and children that anything is possible.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Melanie Morgan, Prime Sponsor; Miles Garver; zannual king, NORTH MASON SCHOOL DISTRICT MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT; Jennifer Loughrey; Athena Tauscher; Amy Cole, Elmhurst Elementary; Owen Rowe, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Policy and Governmental Affairs Director.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.