

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1700

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government & Elections, March 28, 2023

Title: An act relating to establishing a memorial on the capitol campus to commemorate eastern Washington.

Brief Description: Establishing a cultural landscape feature on the capitol campus to commemorate eastern Washington.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Kretz, Chapman, Dent, Barnard, Ormsby and Timmons).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/8/23, 97-0.

Committee Activity: State Government & Elections: 3/24/23, 3/28/23 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Specifies criteria for an Eastern Washington Cultural Landscape Feature on the Capitol Campus in Olympia, including specific floral components.
- Creates a non-appropriated account for the deposit of funds, gifts, and grants to support the establishment and maintenance of the feature.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Valdez, Vice Chair; Wilson, J., Ranking Member; Dozier, Fortunato, Hasegawa and Kuderer.

Staff: Danielle Creech (786-7412)

Background: Capitol Campus Memorials. The Capitol Campus in Olympia is home to many memorials for various events and groups of people. These include the World War II

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Memorial, the Law Enforcement Memorial, the Prisoners of War/Missing in Action Memorial, the Medal of Honor Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the Korean War Memorial. The Legislature also authorized the creation of a Global War on Terrorism Memorial in 2022.

Eastern Washington. Eastern Washington is home to a number of species of plants and animals not generally found west of the crest of the Cascade Mountains. These include:

- Ponderosa pine trees, a towering conifer with long needles that has bark smelling of vanilla or butterscotch when scratched;
- greater sage-grouse, a large and intricately plumaged ground-dwelling bird known for its elaborate courtship displays that involve strutting performances; and
- gray wolves, a keystone species responsible for restoring healthy ecosystems through a trophic cascade that benefits numerous other species from songbirds and beavers to fish and butterflies.

Early settlements by European-Americans in Eastern Washington were located in the Walla Walla Valley and were primarily agricultural with a missionary focus on converting local Native Americans. The first chapter in this history was punctuated by a number of violent conflicts between settlers and the tribes. Eastern Washington produces roughly 70 percent of the country's production of apples, and Eastern Washington agriculture is responsible for the state being the largest national producer of hops, spearmint oil, and sweet cherries.

Summary of Amended Bill: Standards are established for an Eastern Washington Cultural Landscape Feature on the Capitol Campus. The feature must recognize the flora and fauna, rich agriculture and forestry, and history of Eastern Washington. The feature must include Ponderosa pine, quaking aspen, and western larch trees, or other site-adapted species. The design of the feature must celebrate Eastern Washington's unique beauty, agricultural significance, and history.

The feature will be implemented by the State Capitol Committee in consultation with the Department of Enterprise Services and Department of Natural Resources. A Washington State Eastern Washington Cultural Landscape Feature Account (Account) is created in the custody of the state treasurer to support the establishment and maintenance of the feature. The Secretary of State may solicit and accept gifts, grants, or endowments for this purpose, which must be deposited into the Account. The Account is subject to allotment but not appropriation, and only the Secretary of State may authorize expenditures.

EFFECT OF STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):

- Grants the Department of Enterprise Services, rather than the Secretary of State, the ability to solicit and accept money from gifts, grants, or endowments for deposit into the Washington State Eastern Washington Cultural Landscape Feature Account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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 on Substitute House Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Some of my earliest memories are visiting my grandparents on capitol hill in Seattle where there were beech trees out front that my great-grandfather had planted that were just enormous. I had never seen anything like it. One of the highlights growing up was walking around Volunteer park and walking around to see all kinds of trees from around the world. Our campus is a beautiful campus with trees from around the world and trees from western Washington but I've always felt that there was one thing missing: there aren't many tree species that typify eastern Washington. There is nothing like the Ponderosa Pine. Quaking aspen are just amazing, they are always moving even with just a breath of wind. The Larch is one of the few conifer trees in the world that drops it's needles in the fall. It turns a beautiful vibrant yellow and I think there is an educational component for children to see trees like that. I think it would be a great addition. DNR has volunteered to donate trees and assist with any questions about species viability on campus. We left the bill a bit vague to ensure the species will survive and thrive, so we wanted to give some discretion to DNR and DES.

OTHER: A memorial typically honors someone who has died or a significant historical event. Most of the memorials on campus are honoring Washington State citizens who have died in various wars. We are specifically looking at a cultural landscape feature, which is honoring a group of people and how they interact with the land and the landscape. As we have heard, there is immense variety in geography and landscape features across the state of Washington. The eastern Washington landscape is very dynamic and intriguing. DES supports this bill for the following reasons. This feature would fit within and continue a theme that the building and grounds department has already started on campus. The original Olmstead landscape architecture firm had a vision for the edges of campus becoming a woodland to preserve native plants, east of Cherry Lane. Just after the landscaping of the west campus began, the great depression hit and unfortunately that portion of the landscaping plan was not realized. Last month the entire capitol campus was accredited internationally as an arboretum. To retain this accreditation, there is an objective to increase and expand the types of plant species growing on campus. This bill aligns nicely with that objective. In particular, we currently do not have any Larch trees, which would be a wonderful addition.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Joel Kretz, Prime Sponsor.

OTHER: Brent Chapman, Washington State Department of Enterprise Services.

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