

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5152

As of January 24, 2025

Title: An act relating to state employee access to peer-reviewed journals.

Brief Description: Concerning state employee access to peer-reviewed journals.

Sponsors: Senators Warnick, Dozier, Hasegawa and Shewmake.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections: 1/24/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to conduct a study on providing state employees with electronic access to peer-reviewed journals.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL AFFAIRS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Danielle Creech (786-7412)

Background: In a number of scientific fields, academics and professionals rely on articles published in peer-reviewed journals for their research. Before publication in a peer-reviewed journal, articles must be reviewed by experts in the field. Reviewers may suggest revisions to an article before it is published, and an article will be rejected from publication if it is lacking in scholarly validity and rigor.

Access to peer-reviewed journals often requires purchasing a subscription or paying an access fee, although specific articles may sometimes be purchased individually. College and university libraries generally subscribe to relevant journals for their students or others with library accounts. The Washington State Library statewide database licensing project also includes a research library with some magazines, periodicals, and scholarly journals.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) is a multidisciplinary team of researchers tasked with conducting nonpartisan policy research at the direction of the Legislature or WSIPP's Board of Directors. Established in 1982, WSIPP provides reports to the Legislature on a variety of issue areas of interest to the state Legislature and state agencies. Fiscal and administrative services for WSIPP are provided by The Evergreen State College.

Summary of Bill: WSIPP must conduct a study addressing, at a minimum, potential funding, organizational structure, and policy mechanisms that would provide state employees with electronic access to peer-reviewed journals. The study must be completed by December 1, 2026, and submitted to the appropriate committees of the Legislature.

Appropriation: The bill contains an appropriation(s) totaling \$83,000 from various accounts.

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: PRO: This will help all state agencies have access to the best available science without having to pay a lot of additional expenses. The study to evaluate the applicability of a scientific journal consortium to save taxpayer dollars and enhance access to the best available science is similar to what is already in place in several other states. Washington State RCW 34.05.271 and RCW 34.05.272 mandates using the best available science for policy decisions. However, state employees access to peer reviewed journals is limited by the funds allocated to access these journals in each institution. For policy development in our state to be the caliber that Washingtonians deserve, we need to find a better path forward. Researchers used to have access to journal articles through the state library but during the recession, that access went away and it has never returned. Today, most journal articles are behind paywalls which charge \$10 to \$20 per article, which can be cost-prohibitive. Access to these resources is crucial in order to provide the best advice to the Legislature and the Governor.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Judy Warnick, Prime Sponsor; Keri-Anne Jetzer, WA State Sentencing Guidelines Commission; Natalie Marshall, Washington AgForestry Leadership Program; Cody LaRiviere, Washington AgForestry Leadership Program; Paul D'Agnolo, Washington AgForestry Leadership Program; Stacey Rasmussen, AgForestry Leadership; Francisco Santiago-Ávila, Washington Wildlife First.

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