

Blue Ribbon Parks and Outdoor Recreation Task Force
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September 16, 2014 | Seattle Task Force Meeting Summary

The sixth and final task force meeting was held Tue, Sep 16 at The Mountaineers in Seattle. The objectives were to discuss the revised report sent to members for review on Sep 11, and reach consensus on the final report due to the Governor on Sep 19. There was no public comment period. Mountaineers Executive Director Martinique Grigg, together with Cheryl Fraser, Seattle Parks and Recreation Director of Regional Parks and Strategic Outreach, welcomed participants. Eleven of the 17 voting members attended. Marc Berejka, Dale Denney, Patty Graf-Hoke, Connor Inslee, Noah McCord, and Shiloh Schauer were unable to attend. Six of the 12 non-voting members participated. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife regional director Bob Everett attended on behalf of non-voting member Joe Stohr. Non-voting members Rebecca Wallace, Rep. Vincent Buys, Sen. Linda Parlette, Sen. Kevin Ranker, and Rep. Steve Tharinger were unable to attend. At least 15 citizens and stakeholders were present.

Key Outcomes

Task force members proposed and reached agreement on the following five recommendations. These will be reviewed once more by co-chairs and incorporated in the final report. The amount of taxes represented in these five recommendations totals \$100 million.

- 1. Discover Pass (Improve):** Is the task force in support of retaining the Discover Pass with improvements (not specified)? This represents no additional Discover Pass projected revenues other than the existing projections (3% increase per year from current level—\$40 million in projected Discover Pass revenues). Yes, a majority of voting members supports this.
- 2. Bottled Water Excise Tax (Reimpose):** The state used to have a bottled water tax, but it dropped off when the candy and soda tax was implemented. Does the task force support re-imposing/reinstating the bottled water sales tax earmarked to fund the recommendations of this task force? Yes, a majority of voting members supports this. This represents approximately \$46 million more in the 2015-17 biennium.
- 3. Motorhome / RV Excise Tax (Reimpose):** Is the task force in support of reimposing this excise tax? Yes, a majority of voting members supports this. This represents approximately \$19.4 million more in the 2015-17 biennium.
- 4. Watercraft Excise Tax (Existing):** There was general discussion of the benefit of having State General Fund support to compensate State Parks for revenues lost due to discounts provided by the legislature for camping and the Discover Pass to disabled veterans, foster homes, seniors, etc. Does the task force support diversion of the existing watercraft excise tax (entire bucket) currently deposited into the State General Fund to fund the recommendations of this task force? Yes, a majority of voting members supports this. This represents approximately \$34.6 million in 2015-17 biennium (dedicated transfer from the General Fund-State).

5. **Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Council (New):** Does the task force support establishing a leadership position with a coordinating council composed of state, federal and local officials; the private sector; and non-profits to serve as the state's lead on outdoor recreation? The intent is to let the Governor decide where this leadership position would reside. Yes, a majority supports this.

Next Steps

- **Thu, Sep 18:** Task force co-chairs will review final draft before submittal to the Governor.
- **Fri, Sep 19:** Final task force report due to the Governor. It will be posted on the task force Web page shortly thereafter: <http://rco.wa.gov/boards/TaskForce.shtml>
- **Tue, Sep 23, 7:00 AM:** Governor announces the final report at the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition annual breakfast (Seattle Westin, 1900 5th Avenue).
- **Mon, Sep 29, 9:00 AM:** Task force final report briefing: Joint Work Session with House Environment Committee and the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government and Information Technology (John L. O'Brien Building, Olympia – House Hearing Room A).