

Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

Deb Chroniak 271-1403

HB 488, establishing a state parks advisory council.

Hearing Date: March 15, 2017

Time Opened: 10:02 a.m.

Time Closed: 10:12 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Carson, Reagan and Gannon

Members of the Committee Absent : Senators Woodburn and Soucy

Bill Analysis: This bill re-establishes the state park system advisory council which was repealed on June 30, 2016.

This bill is a request of the department of resources and economic development.

Sponsors:

Rep. Christensen

Rep. Suzanne Smith

Rep. L'Heureux

Sen. Fuller Clark

Who supports the bill: Representative Chris Christensen, Hillsborough 21 and Chair of House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee; Nancy Stiles, Self; Philip Bryce, Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED), Parks Division; Senator Fuller Clark, District 21; Paul Doscher, New Hampshire Audubon and self

Who opposes the bill: No one

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Chris Christensen (in support) (testimony provided):

- Noted that the Parks Division of DRED is operationally, self-supporting and does not have a large staff, so getting outside opinions and having people track different information is very beneficial to the Division. This previously was part of the State Park System Advisory Council's task. They previously had this Advisory Council for a number of years, but when it sunset it was overlooked and was not reinstated. This is a definite void for the Parks Division and they would like to see the Advisory Council reinstated.

- The Advisory Council membership was represented by three members of the House of Representatives, two Senate members, DRED Commissioner or designee, and ten members of the public who represented a variety of disciplines who were

appointed by the Governor.

- Meet monthly in Concord and sometimes at various park sites around the state.

Senator Reagan asked if there was any legislation which was submitted by this group. Representative Christensen was not absolutely positive.

Nancy Stiles, self, Hampton, New Hampshire (in support):

- Served on the State Park System Advisory Council for six years.
- Provides consumer input to the Division from all over the state.
- Membership represents a varied consumer base, providing input which provides insight to the Division.
- The last piece of legislation which came out of the Advisory Council was to take a look at statutes, due to conflicting statutes. Statutes were merged so the fee package would go to fiscal committee for approval.

Philip A. Bryce, Director, Division of Parks and Recreation (DRED) (in support) (testimony provided)

- Asking to reinstate the State Park Advisory Council which was sunset by chapter law (June 30, 2016).
- Council was created in 2007 under SB 74 by a commission which studied the park system. The purpose of the Council was to provide advise to the Division on operation and development of the State Park system, including issues related to capital appropriations, leases and long-term agreements.
- The Council's advise was a major factor that helped the State Park system get back on its feet.

Paul Doscher, Weare, New Hampshire (in support):

- A member of the State Park Advisory Council from 2007 to 2014.
- Council serves a valuable purpose in bringing a variety of perspectives for the Director and staff to help them understand public issues and concerns.
- This is a very useful function for the Division of Parks and Recreation.
- He appreciated the opportunity to be on the Council.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: No one

Hearing closed at 10:12 a.m.

Future Action: Ought to Pass with Amendment

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Date Hearing Report completed: March 17, 2017

[file: HB 488-F report]