

ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2011
COMMITTEE STATEMENT
LB549

Hearing Date: Friday February 04, 2011
Committee On: Natural Resources
Introducer: Council
One Liner: Create Nebraska Youth Conservation Program and provide duties for the Game and Parks Commission

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

Vote Results:
Aye: 8 Senators Carlson, Christensen, Dubas, Haar, Langemeier, McCoy, Schilz, Smith
Nay:
Absent:
Present Not Voting:

Proponents: Senator Brenda Council Jim Swenson Duane Hovorka	Representing: Introducer Game and Parks Commission Nebraska Wildlife Federation
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Opponents:	Representing:
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Neutral:	Representing:
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Summary of purpose and/or changes:

LB 549 creates the Nebraska Youth Conservation Program that will be administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and that employs at-risk youth in natural resource conservation jobs.

Explanation of amendments:

The committee amendment, AM1121, replaces the original bill and would do the following.

Section 1 creates legislative findings that: Nebraska youth should be encouraged to reach their full potential; employing at-risk youth to conserve, develop, enhance and maintain our natural resources is beneficial to all; and the Nebraska Youth Conservation Program offers the state this unique opportunity.

States the intent of the Legislature is that program participants learn good work habits, positive attitudes and broadened professional horizons; that the program combine academic, environmental, and job skills training to develop productive youth; and that the Game and Parks Commission coordinate and collaborate with government, educational, and community partners for the benefit of participants.

Section 2 defines at-risk youth as one with a barrier to successful employment, demonstrates low income, has been impacted by substance or physical abuse or negative contact with law enforcement; or has school problems.

Section 3 creates the Nebraska Youth Conservation Program, which is to employ at-risk youth in natural resources jobs under the Game and Parks Commission's jurisdiction. The commission is authorized to administer the program or to contract administration with another appropriate entity or the Department of Labor.

Requires participants be at-risk youth, 16 to 21 years of age, unemployed, and from Nebraska. Special effort is to be made to select applicants in rural or urban high-poverty areas. Participants in the six-week program are temporary employees, are to be paid no less than the minimum wage, and may receive meals and protective clothing.

Clarifies that the program should not displace current employees or cause reductions in their hours or wages, should be in compliance with applicable federal and state labor and education laws, and authorizes the commission to coordinate with job training and placement programs.

Sections 4 and 5 authorize the commission to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations, and require the commission to report on the program to the Legislature by December 1, 2012.

Sections 6, 7, and 8 create the Nebraska Youth Conservation Program Fund, require the State Treasurer to transfer \$994,400 from the State Settlement Cash Fund to the new fund, and amend 59-1608.04, which creates the State Settlement Cash Fund, by eliminating legislative discretion over the fund and authorizing the Attorney General to determine the fund's use.

Sections 9, 10 and 11 assign the new language to the Game and Parks Commission statutory sections, repeal the original sections, and insert an emergency clause.

Chris Langemeier, Chairperson