

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 605

Introduced by Wishart, 27; Geist, 25; Slama, 1.

Read first time January 20, 2021

Committee: Executive Board

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to outdoor recreation and education; to create
- 2 the Outdoor Recreation and Education Study Committee of the
- 3 Legislature.
- 4 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. (1) The Legislature finds that outdoor recreation and
2 education are an integral part of Nebraska's way of life and its economic
3 vitality and public health. The Legislature further finds that the state
4 must prioritize the following goals: (a) Supporting the outdoor
5 recreation economy of Nebraska and working toward equitable and inclusive
6 access to the outdoors, (b) creating and developing an inventory of
7 existing public and private resources promoting outdoor recreation and
8 education, (c) coordinating outdoor recreation and education policy and
9 management among federal, state, and local governmental entities, (d)
10 assisting in promoting and marketing opportunities and events for outdoor
11 recreation and education, (e) developing strategies to recruit and grow
12 outdoor recreation businesses, to promote tourism, and to enhance
13 recreation-related employment in Nebraska, (f) supporting outdoor and
14 community-based learning opportunities as a standard feature of
15 education, (g) promoting education and the use of outdoor recreational
16 assets to enhance public health, (i) collecting data on the impact of
17 outdoor recreation and education in the state and the accessibility of
18 natural resources for underserved populations, and (j) recommending
19 initiatives to increase access to outdoor recreational amenities and
20 experiences as well as to increase youth time spent outdoors during the
21 school day, before and after school, and during the summer;

22 (2) The Legislature declares that to elevate and improve outdoor
23 recreational and educational opportunities in Nebraska, an appraisal of
24 the state's outdoor recreation and education potential must be conducted
25 by a special study committee of the Legislature. The committee should
26 utilize research conducted by the Department of Natural Resources, the
27 State Department of Education, the Nebraska Tourism Commission, the
28 state's natural resources districts, Nebraska postsecondary educational
29 institutions, the Department of Economic Development, additional public
30 and private sector entities experienced in outdoor recreation and
31 education, and any other entity whose research the committee deems

1 useful. Weighting criteria should first be established in order to
2 identify research needed as well as to establish statewide policy
3 recommendations and identify projects, activities, and programs. To
4 facilitate the creation of criteria to establish priorities, a
5 collaborative effort of experts representing outdoor recreation and
6 education in the state is necessary to ensure a fair and balanced outdoor
7 recreation and education evaluation.

8 Sec. 2. The Outdoor Recreation and Education Study Committee of the
9 Legislature is created. The committee shall consist of the following nine
10 members: Two members appointed by the chairperson of the Appropriations
11 Committee of the Legislature, two members appointed by the chairperson of
12 the Education Committee of the Legislature, one member appointed by the
13 chairperson of the Health and Human Services Committee of the
14 Legislature, two members appointed by the chairperson of the Natural
15 Resources Committee of the Legislature, one member appointed by the
16 chairperson of the Agriculture Committee of the Legislature, and one
17 member appointed by the chairperson of the Urban Affairs Committee of the
18 Legislature. The members shall be appointed within thirty days after the
19 effective date of this act and shall begin serving immediately following
20 notice of appointment. Members shall elect a chairperson and vice-
21 chairperson. The Director of Research shall assign an employee of the
22 office of Legislative Research to assist the Outdoor Recreation and
23 Education Study Committee of the Legislature to fulfill its duties. The
24 committee may utilize legal counsel and other staff from existing
25 legislative staff and request additional advisory support from
26 appropriate federal or state agencies and from private entities. The
27 committee may accept grants, donations, gifts, or contributions from
28 public or private sources to carry out its duties and purpose. The
29 committee may convene in person or virtually to conduct its business as
30 deemed necessary.

31 Sec. 3. The Outdoor Recreation and Education Study Committee of the

1 Legislature shall bring together a diverse group of outdoor recreation
2 and education stakeholders and interests in Nebraska to identify short-
3 term and long-term statewide goals to improve outdoor recreation and
4 education in the state. On or before January 31, 2022, the committee
5 shall develop and provide a report electronically to the Legislature
6 which contains the following: (1) A listing of policies, programs,
7 projects, and activities to meet the goals described in section 1 of this
8 act, (2) research, data, and modeling needed to assist the state in
9 meeting such goals, and (3) recommendations for the prioritization of
10 policies, programs, projects, and activities to be funded.

11 Sec. 4. To identify recommendations for statewide funding
12 priorities described in section 3 of this act, the Outdoor Recreation and
13 Education Study Committee of the Legislature shall establish criteria
14 based on, but not limited to, the following factors: (1) The extent to
15 which the policy, program, project, or activity assists the state in
16 meeting its statutory obligations, (2) the cost-effectiveness of the
17 policy, program, project, or activity relative to achieving the state's
18 outdoor recreational and educational goals, (3) the extent to which the
19 policy, program, project, or activity contributes to the state's ability
20 to leverage state funds with partners in local or federal government or
21 other partners to maximize the use of such funds, and (4) the extent to
22 which the policy, program, project, or activity contributes to multiple
23 outdoor recreational and educational goals, including, but not limited
24 to, recreation benefits, educational outcomes, wildlife habitat, and
25 conservation and preservation of natural resources for future
26 generations.

27 Sec. 5. The Outdoor Recreation and Education Study Committee of the
28 Legislature terminates on February 1, 2022.