



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT MEMO

2017 Assembly Bill 688

**Assembly Substitute
Amendment 1**

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2017 ASSEMBLY BILL 688

2017 Assembly Bill 688 establishes a Wisconsin Conservation Corps program. The bill authorizes the Department of Administration (DOA) to transfer up to \$400,000 from existing appropriations for the program, subject to passive approval by the Joint Committee on Finance. The bill authorizes DOA to either administer and manage the program or contract with a nonprofit corporation or institution of higher education to administer and manage the program. The bill provides various requirements applicable to projects, workers, applicants, and the manager as part of the program.

ASSEMBLY SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT 1

Like the bill, Assembly Substitute Amendment 1 establishes a Wisconsin Conservation Corps program and authorizes DOA to transfer up to \$400,000 from existing appropriations for the program, subject to passive review by the Joint Committee on Finance. However, whereas the bill authorizes DOA to contract with a nonprofit corporation or institution of higher education to administer the program, Assembly Substitute Amendment 1 **requires** DOA to contract with a nonprofit corporation to administer and manage the program. Under the substitute amendment, that nonprofit corporation must be operating on a statewide basis when the bill takes effect, and it must have demonstrated experience in grant program writing and administration, natural resources conservation, and youth training, education, and employment.

With modifications and exceptions, the substitute amendment incorporates many of the program requirements set forth under the bill, but under the substitute amendment, many of those requirements are required terms of the contract to be negotiated between DOA and a

nonprofit corporation. Specifically, the contract negotiated under the substitute amendment must require the nonprofit corporation to do all of the following:

- Develop a project application form.
- Review project applications submitted by local governments, tribal governments, universities, colleges, technical colleges, or nonprofit corporations, and executive branch agencies (“sponsors”) and negotiate agreements with sponsors to provide work crews to complete eligible projects.
- To the greatest extent practicable, approve applications for projects that are located in at least one of each of the technical college districts in each year.
- Require projects to be sited on government-owned or tribal land.
- Require projects to be for purposes of specified environmental conservation purposes, including new trail construction, trail rehabilitation, invasive species management, bridge and boardwalk construction, reforestation, timber stand improvement, stream bank stabilization, erosion control, rain garden installation, prairie restoration, historical site preservation, recreation site maintenance, wild land fire hazard reduction and fuels management, lake and stream restoration, boundary marking, fencing, landscaping, disaster preparation or relief, construction or repair of real property improvements such as gazebos or amphitheaters, or any other similar project, as determined by the manager.
- Require that each work crew member on a project be between the ages of 16 and 25.
- Require that at least 50% of work crew members on each project either have no postsecondary education or have a family income of not more than 200% of the federal poverty line on the date of initial employment or enrollment.
- Require each sponsor to erect a permanent plaque upon completion of a project.
- If it determines that work crew members on a project would be eligible for Americorps funding, submit an application for such funding.
- After submitting any application for Americorps funding or other funding applications, submit a grant application to DOA.
- Submit an annual report to DOA identifying certain project information, recommendations, and to the greatest extent practical, specified educational and employment outcomes.

The substitute amendment authorizes DOA to award a grant for a proposed project in an amount that is not more than \$75,000, if a project sponsor has provided funding for the project in an amount that is at least 50% of the amount of the grant. The substitute amendment provides that the cumulative amount of administrative costs charged by DOA, the nonprofit program manager, and a sponsor in connection with a grant may not exceed 10% of the amount of the grant.

Finally, the substitute amendment requires DOA to submit an annual report to the Legislature. The annual report must identify certain completed and pending projects, the locations of such projects, and aggregate education and jobs data.

BILL HISTORY

Representative Mursau offered Assembly Substitute Amendment 1 on January 16, 2018. On January 17, 2018, the Assembly Committee on State Affairs voted to recommend adoption of the substitute amendment on a vote of Ayes, 14; Noes, 0. On the same day, the committee voted to recommend passage of the bill, as amended, on a vote of Ayes, 13; Noes, 1.

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