
SENATE BILL 5966

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2007 Regular Session

By Senators Swecker, Jacobsen, Morton, Hargrove, Shin and Kline

Read first time 02/09/2007. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation.

1 AN ACT Relating to preparing a response to the consequences of
2 climate change on the forests of the state; creating new sections; and
3 making appropriations.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that sustained
6 global climatic changes will have an effect on the health and
7 productivity of the forests in Washington. In just one instance,
8 recent observations of high summer temperatures coupled with low
9 moisture in eastern Washington, both outside of the one hundred year
10 historic range of variability, are contributing to an alarming increase
11 in mountain pine beetle infestations. The increase in pest
12 infestations leads to an increase in tree mortality and severe fires.

13 (2) The legislature further finds that minimizing the impacts of
14 global climate change, and restoring the health and resiliency of
15 eastern Washington's forests, will require an accelerated approach to
16 research coupled with an aggressive outreach and training program to
17 motivate an appropriate response on the ground. Better data can be
18 used to mobilize ground responses with enhanced site-specific
19 treatments.

1 (3) The legislature further finds that investments made today, both
2 in research, training, and on-the-ground treatments, will prove more
3 cost-effective, conserve more resources, and save more firefighting
4 costs than the option of doing nothing.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The department of natural resources shall
6 contract with the college of forest resources at the University of
7 Washington to:

8 (1) Determine how treatments may be customized to site-specific
9 conditions and to identify the most cost-effective treatments for
10 reducing the risk of climate change and restoring forest health.

11 (2) Implement a program of technology transfer through a series of
12 outreach activities, including trainer training, community group
13 outreach, and the production of streaming video and other instructional
14 materials concerning the risks of not responding to changing climatic
15 conditions and the benefits of various treatment options.

16 (3) Develop methods by which state and federal agencies, private
17 and community groups, and Indian tribes may directly assess the costs
18 associated with different management options, including the cost of no
19 action and how future costs can be avoided.

20 (4) Analyze the institutional cost accounting methods to
21 demonstrate where savings are accumulated and where investments are
22 most needed to restore forest health, and provide recommended
23 alternatives that can improve the responsiveness of treatments, biomass
24 collection, and infrastructure development investments aimed at
25 reducing health risks as applied differently to federal, state, and
26 private ownerships.

27 (5) Support other programs that assess the feasibility of
28 converting large amounts of underutilized biomass into useful products
29 and green energy by providing required analyses needed to efficiently
30 collect and deliver biomass to green energy end users.

31 (6) Conduct a pilot project on a high hazard area of forest land
32 that collects and analyzes remote sensing data, using tools such as
33 light detection and ranging data, in order to rapidly track forest
34 health changes and provide information for planning ground treatments
35 and the design of a comprehensive health tracking and treatment
36 planning system for state monitoring.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The sum of five hundred thousand
2 dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for
3 the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, from the general fund to the
4 department of natural resources for the purposes of this act.

5 (2) The sum of five hundred thousand dollars, or as much thereof as
6 may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30,
7 2009, from the general fund to the department of natural resources for
8 the purposes of this act.

--- END ---