

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6256

As of January 18, 2010

Title: An act relating to maximizing the ecosystem services provided by forestry through the promotion of the economic success of the forest products industry.

Brief Description: Maintaining a base of forest lands that may be used for commercial forestry.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Morton, Hatfield, Shin, Regala and Parlette.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/18/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: In 1974 the Legislature passed the Forest Practices Act (Act). The purpose of the Act is to protect public resources while maintaining a viable forest products industry. The Act also established the Forest Practices Board (Board). The Board is an independent state agency chaired by the Commissioner of Public Lands. The Board adopts rules that set standards for forest practices such as timber harvest, pre-commercial thinning, road construction, fertilization, and forest chemical application.

The Act requires that the Board inform counties and other governmental entities early in the rule development phase of the Board's intent to add or amend a forest practices rule.

Summary of Bill: The Board is required to adopt forest practices rules that promote and foster a sound economic future for the forest products industry. The Board is also required to provide procedures for the voluntary development of resource management plans, including voluntary conservation measures.

Prior to adopting new rules, the Board must, when appropriate, propose related incentives for landowners to provide voluntary conservation measures. The voluntary conservation measures must include:

- criteria for evaluating whether or not the intended outcomes of the measures are being achieved; and
- the identification of the party or parties responsible for conducting the evaluation.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Proposed voluntary conservation measures that require public funding for a new or expanded landowner incentive program satisfy the requirements only if adequate funding for the initiative has been secured concurrently with the adoption of the proposal.

If the Board is presented with two or more alternative proposed rules, the Board is required to adopt the rule that retains the greatest economic value to forestry while achieving the minimum standard necessary requirements, if the level of environmental protection achieved by one of the alternative rule proposals cannot be shown to substantially have more benefits to the resource.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2010.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.