
Education Committee

HB 1331

Brief Description: Allocating federal forest revenue to public schools based on resident students.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunt and Finn; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Distributes federal forest revenues to school districts based on their proportion of resident enrolled students, rather than all enrolled students, compared to the total number of students in the county.

Hearing Date: 2/1/11

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Federal law requires that a portion of revenues from federal forests be distributed to the counties in which the forests are located, to be used for public roads and public schools. Washington law requires half of the funds to be distributed to school districts based on the proportion of students enrolled in each district compared to the total number of students in the county. However, the amount of the federal forest revenues is deducted from a school district's Basic Education allocation, so there is no financial advantage for school districts with federal forest lands.

One exception is the school districts in Skamania County, which retain 70 percent of any federal forest fund revenues under the terms of a legal settlement that occurred in 1989. Skamania was singled out because of special terms under the federal Mt. St. Helen's Act of 1982.

There are four school districts in Skamania County, which split the federal forest fund revenues based on the proportional share of their enrollment. In recent years, one of the school districts has begun to offer an online learning program that has caused an increase in its enrollment from

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non-resident students. According to recent reports, 28 percent of the total enrollment in the Stevenson-Carson School District is from non-resident students in the online learning program.

Summary of Bill:

Federal forest revenues are distributed to school districts based on the proportion of resident students enrolled in the district compared to the total number of students in the county, rather than based on the proportion of all students enrolled in the district. A resident student is one who lives within the boundaries of the school district.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2011.