

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8007

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, February 17, 1995

Brief Description: Requesting that a state of forest health emergency be declared and that salvage sales of dead and dying trees be expedited.

Sponsors: Senators Morton, Hargrove, Oke, Winsley and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources: 2/2/95, 2/17/95 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Joint Memorial No. 8007 be substituted therefor, and the substitute joint memorial do pass.

Signed by Senators Drew, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Hargrove, Haugen, Morton, Oke, Owen, Snyder, Strannigan and Swecker.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: 1994 was the worst in a series of catastrophic forest fire seasons in the west. In the western United States, 2.9 million acres were burned, including 285,000 acres in Washington State.

Salvaging timber from the forest fires and improving forest health in eastern Washington and other western states is necessary to reduce fire damage and the problems that would be caused by future forest fires.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The President of the United States is asked to declare a state of forest health emergency in eastern Washington and other affected areas, and request the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to expedite salvage sales of dead and dying trees. The United States Department of Agriculture is asked to conduct salvage logging, control disease and insects, and reforest burned areas.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Language is added to request the United States Department of Agriculture to participate in efforts to ensure the long-term health of Washington's natural resources. The Department of Agriculture is specifically asked to (1) conduct salvage logging on all forest lands burned by the wild fires in 1994 or before, (2) to take steps to control diseases and insects, and (3) to reseed and replant seedlings in burned areas.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: Prompt action is needed to restore burned forests.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Department of Natural Resources; Washington Forest Protection Association.