

***Natural Resources Committee***

***HB 2105***

***Brief Description:*** *Modifying provisions related to small forest landowners.*

***Sponsors:*** *Representatives Sump, Doumit, Pearson, Rockefeller and Woods.*

***Brief Summary of Bill***

- *Alternate plans for small forest landowners are intended to provide flexibility for low-impact activities that provide protection for riparian functions based upon site specific conditions.*
- *A small forest landowner who is unable to cut any timber because of regulatory conditions is eligible for compensation through the riparian easement program up to fifty percent of the value of the timber that can't be harvested.*

***Hearing Date:*** *2/19/01*

***Staff:*** *Bill Lynch (786-7092).*

***Background:***

*Parcels of forest land of less than twenty acres are exempt from the Forest and Fish rules if the landowner implements an alternative plan for managing the property. The alternate plans are site-specific plans that must meet riparian functions while requiring less costly regulatory prescriptions. The Small Forest Landowner Office within the Department of Natural Resources is required to work with these landowners to develop alternate plans for riparian buffers. The office is directed to develop criteria for the Forest Practices Board to adopt in a manual for alternate management plans for these parcels. An advisory committee consisting of a representative of the Department of Ecology, a representative of the Department of Fish and Wildlife, a tribal representative, and four small forest landowners appointed by the Commissioner of Public Lands was established to assist in developing policy and recommending rules to the Forest Practices Board. There is some disagreement regarding the flexibility that these alternate plans are suppose to provide the small forest landowners.*

*In order to participate in the riparian easement program and obtain compensation through the small forest landowner office, it is necessary to have a forest practices application. Some owners of forest land are unable to qualify for the program because they are unable to obtain a forest practices application to cut timber on their property because of regulatory constraints.*

***Summary of Bill:***

*Language is added to clarify that alternate plans are intended to provide flexibility to landowners by allowing low-impact activities that provide protection to riparian functions based upon specific field conditions or stream conditions on the landowner's property.*

*If a landowner is unable to get a forest practices application to cut timber on any of his or her land because of regulatory impacts, the landowner may still qualify as a small forest landowner. The small forest landowner office is responsible for determining the amount of compensation that is to be offered to a small forest landowner who is unable to obtain a forest practices application because of regulatory impacts. The compensation to be offered to these small forest landowners is an amount equal to fifty percent of the value of the timber that cannot be harvested.*

***Appropriation:*** None.

***Fiscal Note:*** Requested on February 14, 2001..

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