
SENATE BILL 6548

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senators Palumbo and Van De Wege

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the joint legislative task force
2 on fire service administration; creating new sections; and providing
3 an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the
6 administration of emergency response and fire suppression services in
7 Washington state is fragmented at the statewide level with
8 responsibilities being fulfilled by the state patrol, the state
9 military department, and the department of natural resources among
10 many other governmental and private entities. It is the intent of the
11 legislature to examine this current administrative structure and
12 division of responsibilities and to recommend improvements which are
13 intended to streamline, consolidate, and increase the efficiency of
14 Washington's fire suppression and emergency response services.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) A joint legislative task force on fire
16 service administration is established, with members as provided in
17 this subsection.

18 (a) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from
19 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

1 (b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one
2 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
3 representatives.

4 (c) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
5 representatives jointly shall appoint members representing the
6 following:

- 7 (i) Washington state patrol;
- 8 (ii) Washington state military department;
- 9 (iii) Washington state department of natural resources;
- 10 (iv) Washington state council of firefighters;
- 11 (v) Washington fire chiefs;
- 12 (vi) Washington state firefighters' association;
- 13 (vii) Washington fire commissioners association;
- 14 (viii) Association of Washington cities;
- 15 (ix) Washington state association of counties;
- 16 (x) Washington federally recognized Indian tribes;
- 17 (xi) Washington environmental proponents;
- 18 (xii) Timber interests; and
- 19 (xiii) Private fire contractors.

20 (d) The governor shall appoint one member representing the
21 Washington forest practices board.

22 (2) The task force shall:

23 (a) Request the participation of and consult with: The United
24 States forest service, the bureau of land management, and the United
25 States parks service.

26 (b) Review and assess the current structure and responsibilities
27 for providing fire and nonpolice emergency response services within
28 Washington state.

29 (c) Review and assess the current structure and responsibilities
30 for providing fire and nonpolice emergency response services in other
31 western states.

32 (d) Make recommendations for improving the structure and
33 efficiency of Washington's response administration and hierarchy.

34 (e) Make recommendations on establishing fire protection for
35 areas that do not have any protection.

36 (f) Make recommendations on regionalizing and consolidating fire
37 protection jurisdictions.

38 (g) Make recommendations about the adequacy and stability of fire
39 service funding.

1 (h) Make recommendations related to the adequacy of existing
2 communication systems.

3 (3) The task force shall choose its cochairs from among its
4 legislative membership, which must include one representative from
5 the house of representatives and one senator from the senate. The
6 legislative membership shall convene the initial meeting of the task
7 force no later than July 1, 2018. The task force shall convene at
8 least four meetings in 2018.

9 (4) The task force shall submit a report, which may include
10 findings and recommendations, to the governor and the appropriate
11 committees of the legislature by December 1, 2018. A minority report
12 must be submitted along with the task force's report if requested by
13 any member of the task force.

14 (5) Staff support for the task force shall be provided by the
15 senate committee services and the house of representatives office of
16 program research.

17 (6) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for
18 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative
19 members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they
20 are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer,
21 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for
22 other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

23 (7) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the
24 senate and the house of representatives. Task force expenditures are
25 subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee
26 and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their
27 successor committees.

28 (8) This section expires December 31, 2018.

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