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**HOUSE BILL 1168**

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**State of Washington**

**67th Legislature**

**2021 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Springer, Kretz, Fitzgibbon, Griffey, Riccelli, Lekanoff, Ramos, Callan, Harris-Talley, Dent, and Klicker

Read first time 01/13/21. Referred to Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to long-term forest health and the reduction of  
2 wildfire dangers; amending RCW 76.06.200 and 76.06.150; adding new  
3 sections to chapter 76.04 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** FINDINGS AND DETERMINATIONS. (1) Over the  
6 last decade, wildfires have grown larger and increased in intensity  
7 and destructiveness throughout Washington state. The annual acres  
8 burned in our state illustrates this alarming trend. In the 1990s, an  
9 average of 86,000 acres burned annually. In the 2000s, the average  
10 annual acres burned increased to 189,000. In the last five years, the  
11 annual average grew to more than 488,000 acres burned. This  
12 trajectory of escalation continued last year, with wildfires burning  
13 more than 812,000 acres. Recent wildfires have devastated state,  
14 federal, tribal, and private lands, destroyed homes and property, and  
15 taken lives. These fires have also released greenhouse gases,  
16 destroyed critical fish and wildlife habitat, filled our skies with  
17 toxic smoke, polluted our waters, damaged our economy, increased the  
18 risk of flooding and landslides, created a critical need for  
19 reforestation, and threatened the natural resources needed for  
20 essential industries and rural economies.

1 (2) Catastrophic wildfires have significant negative impacts on  
2 fish and wildlife habitat, including the loss and degradation of  
3 places to shelter and feed, water quality and quantity, and soil  
4 nutrients. Washington's fish and wildlife are part of a fire-adapted  
5 landscape, but catastrophic wildfires threaten their health and  
6 recovery.

7 (3) Wildfires result in significant greenhouse gas emissions.  
8 Wildfires have become one of the largest sources of black carbon in  
9 the last five years. From 2014-2018, wildfires in Washington state  
10 generated 39.2 million metric tons of carbon, the equivalent of more  
11 than 8.5 million cars on the road a year. In 2015, when 1.13 million  
12 acres burned in Washington, wildfires were the second largest source  
13 of greenhouse gas emissions, second only to transportation.

14 (4) The legislature has recognized our forests, as well as the  
15 manufacturing and utilization of wood products, as a natural carbon  
16 solution and critical component of our state's carbon reduction  
17 strategy pursuant to chapter 120, Laws of 2020. Wildfires threaten  
18 the ability of our forests to sequester carbon, and they threaten the  
19 stability and long-term viability of our forest products industry.

20 (5) The Washington state department of natural resources' 20-year  
21 forest health strategic plan and climate risk assessment finds that  
22 carbon emissions from wildfires are anticipated to increase if there  
23 is no change in forest management practices. Unless the state  
24 significantly increases active forest management across land  
25 ownerships to reduce the risk and intensity of wildfires, wildfire  
26 emissions will erode efforts to achieve our state's greenhouse gas  
27 emissions reduction goals.

28 (6) Wildfires inflict huge costs to the state budget, the budgets  
29 of partner agencies, and our economy. From 2014-2019, agencies in  
30 Washington annually spent nearly \$150 million fighting wildfires. In  
31 2015, firefighting costs were more than \$342 million. In 2019,  
32 firefighting costs were more than \$172 million. And suppression costs  
33 are only a small portion of the full economic impact. According to a  
34 2018 report by the nonprofit headwater's economics, suppression costs  
35 account for only nine percent of the total cost of wildfires when  
36 factoring in disaster recovery, lost business, lost infrastructure,  
37 and timber damage, and public health impacts.

38 (7) Over one-half of Washington is forested, providing  
39 significant environmental and economic value. Over \$4,900,000,000 in  
40 wages and \$200,000,000 in taxes are paid by the forest products'

1 sector each year. Opportunities exist to boost our rural economies  
2 through wildfire preparation and preparedness that maintain and  
3 attract private sector investments and employment in rural  
4 communities.

5 (8) Wildfires are significant threats to life and property. Over  
6 the last five years, wildfires in Washington have taken five lives,  
7 including four firefighters and the life of a one-year old boy. In  
8 2020 alone, 298 homes were destroyed by wildfires in our state. More  
9 than 1,100 homes have been destroyed this decade. Communities in  
10 every corner of Washington have felt the impact and devastation of  
11 flames and smoke. In 2020, the town of Malden, Washington was forever  
12 scarred by wildfire. Approximately 80 percent of the town's  
13 structures burned down in the Babb Road fire, including the city  
14 hall, post office, and fire station.

15 (9) Wildfire smoke has significant negative impacts on public  
16 health. For the second time in the last three years, Washington state  
17 had the worst air quality in the world due to wildfires. Communities  
18 in every corner of the state felt the impact. Exposure to particulate  
19 matter in wildfire smoke has been associated with a wide range of  
20 damaging health effects. The particulates in this smoke make those  
21 breathing the air wheeze, cough, shorten their breath, and experience  
22 sore eyes and throats, diminishing health and quality of life. Other  
23 adverse health outcomes are more severe, including increases in  
24 asthma-related hospitalizations, chronic and acute respiratory and  
25 cardiovascular health problems, and premature death.

26 (10) Inadequate levels of forest management and a rapidly  
27 changing climate have increased the risk of catastrophic wildfires  
28 throughout the state. It is the policy of the state to encourage  
29 prudent and responsible forest resource management to maintain the  
30 health of forests and ecosystems in Washington state. Increasing the  
31 pace and scale of forest restoration through fuel reduction,  
32 thinning, and the use of prescribed fire on federal, state, tribal,  
33 and private lands pursuant to the 20-year forest health strategic  
34 plan and RCW 79.10.520 will reduce the risk of catastrophic  
35 wildfires.

36 (11) In 2020, more than 1,300,000 acres of national forest system  
37 land in eastern Washington were considered in need of treatments to  
38 restore forest health and reduce the risk of wildfire hazard  
39 potential. Many of these lands are adjacent to populated communities,  
40 private lands, and state trust lands.

1 (12) In 2020, 166,000 acres of department of natural resources'  
2 land and 74,000 acres of other state-owned lands in eastern  
3 Washington were in need of forest health treatment. These forestlands  
4 provide critical fish and wildlife habitat, natural and cultural  
5 resources, recreation, raw materials for the forest industry, and  
6 funding for counties and schools. From 2011-2020, 102,700 forested  
7 acres of department of natural resources' managed trust lands have  
8 burned.

9 (13) Tribal lands and communities have been significantly  
10 impacted by wildfires and unhealthy forests. Approximately 494,000  
11 acres of tribal lands in eastern Washington need forest health  
12 treatments. These forestlands provide critical fish and wildlife  
13 habitat, natural and cultural resources, and economic opportunities.

14 (14) Washington state has nearly eight million acres of private  
15 forestlands. In eastern Washington alone, approximately 288,000 acres  
16 owned by small forestland owners are in need of forest health  
17 treatment. These forestlands provide critical raw materials for the  
18 forest industry, rural economic opportunities, fish and wildlife  
19 habitat, cultural resources, and recreation.

20 (15) The legislature finds that increasing the pace and scale of  
21 science-based forest health activities to reduce hazardous fuels,  
22 including through mechanical thinning and controlled burning, on  
23 federal, state, tribal, and private lands, will reduce the risk and  
24 severity of wildfires, protect cultural and archaeological resources,  
25 improve fish and wildlife habitat, expand recreational opportunities,  
26 protect air and water quality, create rural economic opportunities,  
27 provide critical wood products, and increase long-term carbon  
28 sequestration on our natural resource lands.

29 (16) Increased development in the wildland urban interface has  
30 also increased the number of people living in areas that are at risk  
31 of wildfire. In Washington, over 2,000,000 homes are currently at  
32 risk of wildfire. Communities and homeowners can take actions that  
33 reduce the risk of loss in the event of wildfire including, but not  
34 limited to, home hardening, creating defensible space, and building  
35 potential control lines or strategic fuel breaks.

36 (17) Long-term, sustainable investment in wildfire response,  
37 forest restoration, and community resilience is of utmost importance  
38 to the health and safety of our environment, our economy, our  
39 communities, and the well-being of every resident.

1 (18) It is the intent of the legislature to take immediate action  
2 to fully fund the wildland fire protection 10-year strategic plan.  
3 Strategies to accomplish these goals include, but are not limited to:

4 (a) Upgrading our capability to attack wildfires with critical  
5 air and ground resources;

6 (b) Providing needed wildfire resources to state wildfire  
7 response and local fire service districts;

8 (c) Working with each state utility, local publicly owned  
9 electric utility, and electrical cooperative to reduce wildfire risk  
10 and develop consistent approaches and shared data related to fire  
11 prevention, safety, vegetation management, and energy distribution  
12 systems; and

13 (d) Improving wildfire detection in areas at risk of wildfire  
14 through new technologies and equipment.

15 (19) Furthermore, it is the intent of the legislature to take  
16 immediate action to increase the pace and scale of forest management  
17 across different land ownerships and fully fund the 20-year forest  
18 health strategic plan and activities developed to facilitate  
19 implementation of the 2020 forest action plan. Strategies to  
20 accomplish these goals include, but are not limited to:

21 (a) Restoring to health a minimum of 1,250,000 acres of  
22 forestland in need of immediate action to become more resilient;

23 (b) Completing prescribed fire and other fuel reduction projects  
24 through proven forestry practices and the operation of prescribed  
25 fire crews;

26 (c) Establishing potential control lines and strategic fuel  
27 breaks around communities with high wildfire risk; and

28 (d) Monitoring forest health conditions and effectiveness of  
29 treatments throughout the state, including ecological function and  
30 reducing catastrophic wildfires.

31 (20) Furthermore, it is the intent of the legislature to take  
32 immediate action to help communities become more resilient to  
33 wildfire. Strategies to accomplish these goals include, but are not  
34 limited to:

35 (a) Increasing funding for cost share programs for home  
36 hardening, fuels reduction, and community resilience programs in  
37 communities at risk of wildfire;

38 (b) Reducing wildfire risk to wildland urban interfaces; and

1 (c) Ensuring our state's most vulnerable populations are not  
2 disproportionately burdened by the impact and consequences of  
3 wildfire.

4 (21) The legislature intends that these investments protect the  
5 state's people, environment, and economy.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** WILDFIRE RESPONSE, FOREST RESTORATION, AND  
7 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE ACCOUNT. (1) The wildfire response, forest  
8 restoration, and community resilience account is created in the state  
9 treasury. All receipts from moneys directed to the account must be  
10 deposited in the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only  
11 after appropriation. Expenditures from the account may be used only  
12 for carrying out the purposes of this act and for no other purposes.

13 (2) Expenditures from the account may be made to state agencies,  
14 federally recognized tribes, local governments, fire and conservation  
15 districts, forest collaboratives, and small forestland owners,  
16 consistent with the 20-year forest health strategic plan, the  
17 wildland fire protection 10-year strategic plan, and the 2020 forest  
18 action plan.

19 (3) The wildfire response, forest restoration, and community  
20 resilience account may only be used to monitor, track, and implement  
21 the following purposes:

22 (a) Fire preparedness activities consistent with the goals  
23 contained in the state's wildland fire protection 10-year strategic  
24 plan including, but not limited to, funding for firefighting capacity  
25 and investments in ground and aerial firefighting resources,  
26 equipment, and technology, and the development and implementation of  
27 a wildland fire aviation support plan in order to expand and improve  
28 the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the department's wildland  
29 fire aviation program;

30 (b) Fire prevention activities to restore and improve forest  
31 health and reduce vulnerability to drought, insect infestation,  
32 disease, and other threats to healthy forests including, but not  
33 limited to, silvicultural treatments, seedling development, thinning  
34 and prescribed fire, and postfire recovery activities to stabilize  
35 and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural  
36 resources and minimize threats to life and property resulting from  
37 the effects of a wildfire. Funding priority under this subsection  
38 must be given to programs, activities, or projects aligned with the  
39 20-year forest health strategic plan, the wildland fire protection

1 10-year strategic plan, and the 2020 forest action plan across any  
2 combination of local, state, federal, tribal, and private ownerships;

3 (c) Fire protection activities for homes, properties,  
4 communities, and values at risk including, but not limited to:  
5 Potential control lines or strategic fuel breaks in forests,  
6 rangelands, and communities; improved warning and communications  
7 systems to prepare for wildfires; increased engagement with non-  
8 English speaking communities in their home language for community  
9 preparedness; and the national fire protection association's fire  
10 wise USA and the fire-adapted communities network programs to help  
11 communities take action before wildfires.

12 (4) Appropriations for forest health activities in the 2021-2023  
13 biennium must not be less than \$25,000,000.

14 (5) Funding may not be used for emergency fire costs or  
15 suppression costs as defined in RCW 76.04.005.

16 (6) Any expenditures from the wildfire response, forest  
17 restoration, and community resilience account for forest health  
18 treatments on federal lands must be additive to the baseline  
19 accomplishments and outputs already funded through the federal  
20 government and outlined in the annual work plans of the United States  
21 forest service, bureau of land management, the national park service,  
22 and/or the United States fish and wildlife service.

23 (7) The department may solicit the forest health advisory  
24 committee established in RCW 76.06.200 and wildland fire advisory  
25 committee established in RCW 76.04.179 to provide recommendations for  
26 investments under this section. In assessing investments and  
27 developing recommendations for communities that will be impacted  
28 based on ecological, public infrastructure, and life safety needs as  
29 set forth in the 20-year forest health strategic plan and the  
30 wildland fire protection 10-year strategic plan, the forest health  
31 advisory committee and wildland fire advisory committee must use  
32 environmental justice or equity focused tools, such as the Washington  
33 tracking network's environmental health disparities tool to identify  
34 highly impacted communities. This identification must be used as a  
35 factor in determining recommendations for investments under this  
36 section. "Highly impacted communities" has the same meaning as  
37 defined in RCW 19.405.020.

38 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY. (1) By  
39 December 1st of each even-numbered year, and in compliance with RCW

1 43.01.036, the department must report to the governor and legislature  
2 on the following:

3 (a) The type and amount of the expenditures made, by fiscal year,  
4 and for what purpose, from the wildfire response, forest restoration,  
5 and community resilience account created in section 2 of this act;

6 (b) The amount of unexpended and unobligated funds in the  
7 wildfire response, forest restoration, and community resilience  
8 account and recommendations for the disbursement to local districts;

9 (c) Progress on implementation of the wildland fire protection  
10 10-year strategic plan including, but not limited to, how investments  
11 are reducing human-caused wildfire starts, lowering the size and  
12 scale and geography of catastrophic wildfires, reducing the  
13 communities, landscapes, and population at risk, and creating  
14 resilient landscapes and communities;

15 (d) Progress on implementation of the 20-year forest health  
16 strategic plan as established through the forest health assessment  
17 and treatment framework pursuant to RCW 76.06.200 including, but not  
18 limited to: Assessment of fire prone lands and communities that are  
19 in need of forest health treatments; forest health treatments  
20 prioritized and conducted by landowner type, geography, and risk  
21 level; estimated value of any merchantable materials from forest  
22 health treatments; and number of acres treated by treatment type,  
23 including the use of prescribed fire.

24 (2) The department must include recommendations on any  
25 adjustments that may be necessary or advisable to the mechanism of  
26 funding dispensation as created under this act.

27 (3) The report required in this section should support existing  
28 department assessments pursuant to RCW 79.10.530 and 76.06.200.

29 **Sec. 4.** RCW 76.06.200 and 2019 c 305 s 1 are each amended to  
30 read as follows:

31 (1) The department must establish a forest health assessment and  
32 treatment framework designed to proactively and systematically  
33 address the forest health issues facing the state. Specifically, the  
34 framework must endeavor to achieve an initial goal of assessing and  
35 treating one million acres of land by 2033.

36 (2) The department must utilize the framework to assess and treat  
37 acreage in an incremental fashion each biennium. The framework  
38 consists of three elements: Assessment; treatment; and progress  
39 review and reporting.



1 (a) Assessment. Each biennium, the department must identify and  
2 assess two hundred thousand acres of fire prone lands and communities  
3 that are in need of forest health treatment, including the use of  
4 prescribed fire or mechanical treatment (~~(, such as thinning)~~).

5 (i) The scope of the assessment must include lands protected by  
6 the department as well as lands outside of the department's fire  
7 protection responsibilities that could pose a high risk to department  
8 protected lands during a fire.

9 (ii) The assessment must identify areas in need of treatment, the  
10 type or types of treatment recommended, spatial optimization of  
11 forest treatments across landscapes, data and planning needs to carry  
12 out recommended treatment, and the estimated cost of recommended  
13 treatment.

14 (iii) The department shall develop a mapping tool to identify  
15 small forestland owners within wildfire risk areas and use this tool  
16 to evaluate and optimize forest health work at a landscape scale to  
17 move high risk wildfire areas to lower risk and to leverage funding  
18 and the small forestland owner program and landowner assistance  
19 program in (e) of this subsection with the greatest impact for  
20 wildfire prevention, preparedness, and response.

21 (b) Treatment. Each biennium, the department must review  
22 previously completed assessments and prioritize and conduct as many  
23 identified treatments as possible using appropriations provided for  
24 that specific purpose.

25 (c) Progress review and reporting. By December 1st of each even-  
26 numbered year, the department must provide the appropriate committees  
27 of the legislature and the office of financial management with:

28 (i) A request for appropriations designed to implement the  
29 framework in the following biennium, including assessment work and  
30 conducting treatments identified in previously completed assessments;

31 (ii) A prioritized list and brief summary of treatments planned  
32 to be conducted under the framework with the requested  
33 appropriations, including relevant information from the assessment;  
34 and

35 (iii) A list and brief summary of treatments carried out under  
36 the framework in the preceding biennium, including total funding  
37 available, costs for completed treatment, and treatment outcomes. The  
38 summary must include any barriers to framework implementation and  
39 legislative or administrative recommendations to address those  
40 barriers.

1 (3) In developing and implementing the framework, the department  
2 must:

3 (a) Utilize and build on the forest health strategic planning  
4 initiated under section 308(11), chapter 36, Laws of 2016 sp. sess.,  
5 to the maximum extent practicable, to promote the efficient use of  
6 resources;

7 (b) Prioritize, to the maximum extent practicable consistent with  
8 this section, forest health treatments that are strategically planned  
9 to serve the dual benefits of forest health maximization while  
10 providing geographically planned tools for wildfire response; (~~and~~)

11 (c) Where possible, partner with federally recognized tribes to  
12 expand use of the tribal forest protection act on federal lands  
13 managed by the United States forest service and the bureau of land  
14 management;

15 (d) When entering into good neighbor agreements, as that term is  
16 defined in RCW 79.02.010, prioritize, to the maximum extent  
17 practicable consistent with this section, forest health treatments  
18 adjacent to or nearby state lands so as to increase the speed,  
19 efficiency, and impact on the landscape;

20 (e) Work with local fire districts, conservation districts,  
21 forestland owner associations, community wildfire resilience  
22 coalitions, and Washington State University extension to develop an  
23 integrated small forestland owner assistance program for forest  
24 health activities that:

25 (i) Integrate existing and diversify landowner assistance  
26 programs to more efficiently and effectively reach the diversity of  
27 small forestland owners audiences to take action;

28 (ii) Identifies and removes barriers to technical assistance,  
29 funding, and forest health management planning;

30 (iii) Increases education and outreach to small forestland  
31 owners; and

32 (iv) Distributes funding effectively to move high wildfire risk  
33 areas to lower risk; and

34 (f) Establish a forest health advisory committee to assist in  
35 developing and implementing the framework. The committee may: (i)  
36 Include representation from large and small forestland owners,  
37 wildland fire response organizations, milling and log transportation  
38 industries, forest collaboratives that may exist in the affected  
39 areas, highly affected communities and community preparedness  
40 organizations, conservation groups, and other interested parties

1 deemed appropriate by the commissioner; and (ii) consult with  
2 relevant local, state, and federal agencies, and tribes.

3 (4) In implementing subsection (3)(b) of this section, the  
4 department shall attempt to locate and design forest health  
5 treatments in such a way as to provide wildfire response personnel  
6 with strategically located treated areas to assist with managing fire  
7 response. These areas must attempt to maximize the firefighting  
8 benefits of natural and artificial geographic features and be located  
9 in areas that prioritize the protection of commercially managed lands  
10 from fires originating on public land.

11 (5) The department must establish and implement the forest health  
12 assessment and treatment framework within the appropriations  
13 specifically provided for this purpose.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT. (1) The legislature  
15 finds that satisfying the goals identified in section 1 of this act  
16 to increase the pace and scale of forest health treatments and  
17 improve wildfire prevention and response requires increasing the  
18 workforce that is needed to perform this critical work. This need  
19 creates an opportunity to develop employment and career pathways  
20 across the state, including in rural communities throughout  
21 Washington. Investments to support and further develop the forest  
22 sector workforce are recommended in both the department's 2019 "plan  
23 for climate resilience" and the department of commerce's 2020 report  
24 "Washington's green economy."

25 (2) The department and the department of commerce shall jointly  
26 develop and implement, as appropriate and in consultation with  
27 centers of excellence, higher education, and workforce development  
28 centers, initiatives to develop a forest health workforce necessary  
29 to implement the goals of this section. Initiatives may include, but  
30 are not limited to:

31 (a) Creating a new or making an existing grant program available  
32 to nonprofits, labor organizations, state agencies, community and  
33 technical colleges, institutions of higher education, private sector  
34 employers, skills centers, or other training and education  
35 institutions that have qualifications and experience in the  
36 development of training programs, such as secondary and postsecondary  
37 courses, relevant to the workforce needs of the forest sector. Grants  
38 must be awarded on a competitive basis with priority funding for  
39 programs that meet urgent forest health and wildfire suppression

1 skills gaps and demonstrate a lack of available workforce in  
2 underserved communities. Grants awarded may be used for activities  
3 such as internships, Washington registered apprenticeship programs,  
4 preapprenticeships, career launch, and other relevant career connect  
5 Washington activities, and postsecondary bridge programs for forest  
6 sector or skill relevant trades that provide:

7 (i) On the job training;

8 (ii) Hard and soft skills development;

9 (iii) Test preparation for trade apprenticeship;

10 (iv) Advanced training in the forest sector relating to jobs such  
11 as: Hand crews; wildland firefighters; fire safety; equipment  
12 operators; timber operators; mill workers; mill or forestry  
13 technicians; mechanics; loggers; timber fallers; commercial truck  
14 drivers; foresters; ecologists; biologists; or other workforce needs  
15 in support of forest restoration and wildfire response;

16 (b) Developing education programs for elementary, secondary, and  
17 higher education students that: (i) Inform people about the role of  
18 forestry, fire, vegetation management, and ecological restoration;  
19 (ii) increase the awareness of opportunities for careers in the  
20 forest sector and exposure of students to those careers through  
21 various work-based learning opportunities inside and outside the  
22 classroom; (iii) connect students in pathways to careers in the  
23 forest sector; and (iv) incorporate opportunities for secondary  
24 students to earn industry recognized credentials and dual credit in  
25 career and technical education courses;

26 (c) Developing regional education, industry, and workforce  
27 development collaborations, including recruiting and building  
28 industry awareness and coordinating candidate development  
29 particularly in areas that are traditionally underrepresented in  
30 natural resource industries and specifically in forestry;

31 (d) Building additional statewide response. The department shall  
32 develop a recruiting and outreach program across the state to  
33 encourage people to volunteer with their local fire departments. The  
34 department shall expand existing training programs to meet increased  
35 interest and need in wildfire response and forest health work; and

36 (e) Developing a program to train local building and construction  
37 trade members to be deployed during periods requiring surge capacity  
38 for wildland fire suppression including:

39 (i) As wildland firefighters who meet the requirements of being  
40 utilized by the department; and

1 (ii) As heavy equipment operators who meet the requirements to be  
2 utilized by the department as required by RCW 76.04.181.

3 (3) The commissioner and the director of the department of  
4 commerce must direct their staff to develop a plan for tracking,  
5 maintaining, and publicly reporting on the following:

6 (a) A working definition of the forest sector workforce,  
7 including the job skills, certifications, and experience required;

8 (b) Recommendations for the training, recruitment, and retention  
9 of the current and anticipated forest sector workforce necessary to  
10 implement the goals of this act;

11 (c) The identification of gaps and barriers to a full forest  
12 sector workforce pool, including:

13 (i) Estimates of forest sector workforce jobs created and  
14 retained as well as any reductions in the forest sector workforce;

15 (ii) An estimate of the number of needed private contractors to  
16 implement the goals of this act, an inventory of local and regional  
17 private contractors trained to carry out wildfire response and forest  
18 health work, and a list of local private contractors utilized  
19 annually for wildfire response and forest health work; and

20 (iii) An inventory of existing training facilities and programs  
21 that support ongoing and anticipated forest sector, or related  
22 sectors, as identified in subsection (2)(a)(iv) of this section;

23 (d) Recommendations for addressing identified barriers or other  
24 needs to otherwise continue the development of a forest workforce  
25 necessary to implement the goals of this act.

26 (4) The department and the department of corrections shall  
27 jointly develop opportunities to expand existing programs to provide  
28 the additional wildfire, forest health, and silvicultural capacity  
29 necessary to implement the goals of this act, including a postrelease  
30 program that helps formerly incarcerated individuals who served on  
31 state fire response crews obtain employment in wildfire suppression  
32 and forest management.

33 (5) The department shall utilize existing programs such as the  
34 Washington conservation corps, Washington veterans corps, Washington  
35 service corps, customized and on-the-job training, or similar  
36 programs to expand opportunities and promote family wage careers in  
37 the forest sector workforce.

38 **Sec. 6.** RCW 76.06.150 and 2009 c 163 s 5 are each amended to  
39 read as follows:

1 (1) The commissioner (~~(of public lands)~~) is designated as the  
2 state of Washington's lead for all forest health issues.

3 (2) The commissioner (~~(of public lands)~~) shall strive to promote  
4 communications between the state, tribes, and the federal government  
5 regarding forestland management decisions that potentially affect the  
6 health of forests in Washington and will allow the state to have an  
7 influence on the management of federally owned land in Washington.  
8 Such government-to-government cooperation is vital if the condition  
9 of the state's public and private forestlands are to be protected.  
10 These activities may include, when deemed by the commissioner to be  
11 in the best interest of the state:

12 (a) Representing the state's interest before all appropriate  
13 local, state, and federal agencies and tribes;

14 (b) Assuming the lead state role for developing formal comments  
15 on federal forest management plans that may have an impact on the  
16 health of forests in Washington;

17 (c) Pursuing in an expedited manner any available and appropriate  
18 cooperative agreements, including cooperating agency status  
19 designation, with the United States forest service and the United  
20 States bureau of land management that allow for meaningful  
21 participation in any federal land management plans that could affect  
22 the department's strategic plan for healthy forests and effective  
23 fire prevention and suppression, including the pursuit of any options  
24 available for giving effect to the cooperative philosophy contained  
25 within the national environmental policy act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. Sec.  
26 4331) (~~and~~

27 ~~(d) Pursuing~~).

28 (3) The commissioner shall regularly meet and coordinate with the  
29 regional leadership of the United States forest service, in order to:

30 (a) Identify strategies to improve the delivery and increase the  
31 pace and scale of forest health and resiliency, and fuels mitigation  
32 treatments, on federal lands;

33 (b) Document the resources needed to increase the capacity  
34 available to the United States forest service, on national forests in  
35 Washington;

36 (c) Identify supplemental planning and implementation support to  
37 the United States forest service, through the use of cooperative  
38 agreements and good neighbor agreements, as that term is defined in  
39 RCW 79.02.010;

1 (d) Maximize the utilization of available efficiencies for  
2 compliance with the national environmental policy act, as it applies  
3 to actions of the United States forest service in Washington, such as  
4 tools to increase the pace and scale of forest health treatments  
5 including, but not limited to, categorical exclusions, shared  
6 stewardship, and tribal forest protection act for forest health,  
7 fuels mitigation, and restoration activities;

8 (e) Accelerate national environmental policy act completion for  
9 forest health and resiliency projects, including through increased  
10 staffing and the use of partners, contractors, and department  
11 expertise to complete national environmental policy act requirements  
12 analysis; and

13 (f) Pursue agreements with federal agencies in the service of  
14 forest biomass energy partnerships and cooperatives authorized under  
15 RCW 43.30.835 through 43.30.840.

16 ~~((3) The))~~ (4) Every two years, the commissioner ~~((of public~~  
17 ~~lands))~~ shall report to the ~~((chairs of the appropriate standing~~  
18 ~~committees of the))~~ legislature ~~((every year))~~ on progress under this  
19 section, including ~~((the))~~:

20 (a) The identification, if deemed appropriate by the  
21 commissioner, of any needed state or federal statutory changes,  
22 policy issues, or funding needs; and

23 (b) An estimate of the acres of at-risk forests on each national  
24 forest and the number of acres treated.

25 NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. SHORT TITLE. This act may be known and  
26 cited as the wildfire response, forest restoration, and community  
27 resilience act.

28 NEW SECTION. Sec. 8. Sections 1 through 3 and 5 of this act are  
29 each added to chapter 76.04 RCW and codified with the subchapter  
30 heading of "wildfire response, forest restoration, and community  
31 resilience."

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