

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2004

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, March 31, 1995

Title: An act relating to necessary emergency measures for the Loomis state forest.

Brief Description: Taking emergency measures to protect the health of the Loomis state forest.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Thompson, Fuhrman, Goldsmith, Buck, Elliot, Cairnes and Sheldon).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources: 3/23/95, 3/31/95 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

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

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: The Loomis State Forest is a 144,000 acre forest in north-central Washington. It is the largest contiguous block of forest land managed by the Department of Natural Resources.

Since the late 1980s, timber sales in the Loomis Forest have generally been challenged. The late 1980s also heralded the beginning of an outbreak of mountain pine beetle infestation. Current estimates of the acreage infested range from approximately 40,000 to 60,000 acres. An infestation from western pine beetle is also a concern in that area. Beetle infestation destroys certain tree species, notably lodgepole pine. Once infested, there is a window of time in which to harvest infested timber before the timber loses much of its value.

In spring of 1993, the Department of Natural Resources created the Loomis State Forest Citizen Advisory Committee. The advisory committee comprised 13 members representing a range of viewpoints. The advisory committee's task was to develop management goals and objectives for the Loomis Forest. Through the process developed to reach these goals and objectives, the advisory committee solicited both broad public input and input from technical teams on different subject areas. The advisory committee completed its efforts and submitted its recommended goals and objectives to the department in May 1994. The committee provided goals and objectives for 10 key resource areas: archaeological/cultural resources, recreation, soils, minerals, grazing, water, fish, wildlife, timber, and air. The department is in the process of developing an environmental impact statement on a Loomis Forest management plan, based on the committee's recommendations.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Legislature finds that an emergency forest health situation exists in the Loomis State Forest. The Department of Natural Resources must act expediently to resolve the forest health situation in the Loomis Forest.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The substitute bill required a security of not less than \$100,000 for a person appealing a permit, and an emergency clause. The department was required to maximize revenue.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 6, 1995.

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

Testimony For: This forest has disease and needs better management by the department. Endless appeals of permits to cut timber and improve forest health are costing the trusts money and should be discouraged.

Testimony Against: The department is already working on a forest plan for the Loomis forest.

Testified: PRO: Bonnie Lawrence, Jerry Theis, Okanogan Resource Council; Bob Dick, NW Forestry Assn.; CON: Stan Biles, Dept. of Natural Resources; Scott Merriman, WEC; Lauri Smith, Wilderness Coalition.