

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 5574

C 334 L 95

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning the return of state forest board transfer land.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, A. Anderson, Snyder, McDonald, Owen, Long, Rasmussen, Swecker, Heavey, Morton, Deccio, Johnson, Loveland, Hale, Sutherland, Strannigan, Palmer, Moyer, Hochstatter, West, Drew, Haugen, Quigley, Bauer and Roach).

Senate Committee on Natural Resources

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

House Committee on Natural Resources

Background: In the early 1900s, and up through the 1930s, counties took possession of a number of forest land parcels as a result of tax delinquencies. In many cases, the timber had already been harvested from these lands prior to the forfeiture of the property to the counties.

During this same time, the Legislature grew concerned about reforestation in the state. In 1927, and again in 1935, the Legislature determined that forest lands forfeited to the counties should be deeded to the state and become part of state forest lands. Some 540,000 acres of land were thus transferred to state management. These are called forest board transfer lands.

Forest board transfer lands are held and administered by the Department of Natural Resources. The state may not sell these lands; however, the lands may be leased, and timber and other products may be sold. Up to 25 percent of the gross income from leases and product sales goes into the forest development account. The remainder goes back to the county and is distributed in the same manner as general tax revenues are distributed.

Summary: The Legislature directs that the Legislative Budget Committee, in consultation with the Washington State members of the Western States Legislatures Forestry Task Force and the chairs of the Senate and House of Representatives Committees on Natural Resources, conduct a study of the county forest board timber lands.

The study includes the role of the lands in the state's sustained yield calculation and the effect of removing all or part of these lands; the economic and forest practice implications of separating the forest lands from the total lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources, and the effect of a potential transfer on public access, recreation and management of other private and public lands; and the long-term effects on private timber manufacturing.

The study also includes a comparison of forest management procedures and costs between Grays Harbor County and similar forest board and state trust lands. The Legislative Budget Committee must examine the best possible methods and procedures to transfer the forest

board lands to the counties. The report is submitted to the Legislature on December 31, 1996.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	4	
House	91	3	(House amended)
Senate			(Senate refused to concur)
House	94	0	(House amended)
Senate	45	1	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 23, 1995