
SENATE BILL 6776

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Senators Jacobsen, Swecker, Fraser, Morton, Zarelli, Schoesler, Hargrove, Ranker, Hatfield, and McCaslin

Read first time 01/26/10. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating the joint work group on small forest
2 landowner sustainability; and creating new sections.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that providing for
5 long-term stewardship of nonindustrial forests and woodlands is an
6 important factor in maintaining Washington's special character and
7 quality of life.

8 (2) The legislature further finds that in order to encourage and
9 maintain nonindustrial forests and woodlands for their present and
10 future benefit to all citizens, Washington's nonindustrial forest and
11 woodland owners' long-term commitments to stewardship of forest
12 resources must be recognized and supported by the citizens of the
13 state.

14 (3) The legislature further finds that the adoption of forest
15 practices rules consistent with the forests and fish report, as defined
16 in RCW 76.09.020, has imposed substantial financial burdens on small
17 forest landowners.

18 (4) The legislature further finds that forest practices rules
19 adopted since the forests and fish report have not provided small

1 forest landowners with the alternate plan processes or alternate
2 harvest restrictions that were intended by the legislature to lower the
3 overall cost of regulation to small forest landowners while meeting the
4 public resource protection standard set forth in RCW 76.09.370(3).

5 (5) The legislature further finds that in order to maintain the
6 economic viability of eighty-nine thousand family forest owners,
7 managing five million acres of forest land across the state, small
8 forest landowners must be provided with incentives to keep their land
9 in long-term forestry.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The joint work group on small forest
11 landowner sustainability is established. Utilizing research conducted
12 by the school of forest resources at the University of Washington, the
13 joint work group shall report to the legislature, the commissioner of
14 public lands, and the governor on ways to remove regulatory barriers
15 and disincentives in order to encourage small forest landownership for
16 generations to come.

17 (2) The joint work group on small forest landowner sustainability
18 consists of the members of the house of representatives agriculture and
19 natural resources committee and the senate natural resources, ocean,
20 and recreation committee. The joint work group shall consult with
21 stakeholders and experts in the field of forestry. The joint work
22 group may also request assistance from the department of natural
23 resources, the department of ecology, the department of fish and
24 wildlife, representatives of native American tribes, the environmental
25 community, and the house of representatives office of program research
26 and senate committee services.

27 (3) The joint work group will utilize existing legislative staff
28 and resources and utilize teleconferencing and other communications
29 methods to minimize travel and per diem expenditures for legislators
30 and staff.

31 (4) In developing recommendations, the joint work group shall
32 review and build upon reports related to small forest landowner
33 economic viability, including reports completed for or by the rural
34 technology initiative and the Northwest environmental forum.

35 (5) In developing recommendations, the joint work group shall
36 consider:

1 (a) The long-term sustainability of the forestry riparian easement
2 program defined in RCW 76.13.120 and ways to reform that program.

3 (b) Recommendations on how to address issues unique to small forest
4 lands east of the Cascade mountains, including periodic insect and
5 disease attacks, catastrophic wildfire, and replacement of historic
6 species by shade tolerant species.

7 (c) Whether, how, and to what extent the department of natural
8 resources has evaluated the cumulative impact of small forest landowner
9 alternate management plans or alternate harvest restrictions on
10 essential riparian functions as required by RCW 76.13.110.

11 (d) Whether, how, and to what extent the department of natural
12 resources and the forest practices board have developed alternate plans
13 or alternate harvest restrictions that meet riparian functions while
14 requiring less costly regulatory prescriptions for small forest
15 landowners, including recognition of or credit for improving the
16 condition of public resources.

17 (e) The complexity of administrative rules for small harvests and
18 relatively short stream reaches.

19 (f) Recommendations on ways the forest practices board and the
20 legislature could provide more effective incentives to encourage
21 continued management of nonindustrial forests and woodlands for
22 forestry.

23 (6) The joint work group on small forest landowner sustainability
24 shall deliver its report to the legislature, the commissioner of public
25 lands, and the governor by September 15, 2010, including implementing
26 legislation as necessary.

--- END ---