6657-S AMS BECK KIM 003

**SSB 6657** - S AMD TO S-5171.8 **776**

By Senator Becker

On page 14, after line 14, insert

"NEW SECTION. **Sec. 203.** A new section is added to chapter 76.04 RCW to read as follows:

PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT FOR VOLUNTEERS.

(1) The department must provide all necessary personal protection equipment at no cost to up to one hundred fire suppression volunteers for use while dispatched to wildland fire suppression duty. If the department cannot provide the personal protection equipment, it must offer to reimburse a volunteer who purchases new equipment suitable for the kind of volunteer work to be performed. If the volunteer accepts reimbursement, the volunteer must surrender the equipment for which he or she was reimbursed when the volunteer period comes to an end.

(2) The department must ensure the inventory of personal protection equipment for volunteers is kept in good condition through periodic safety inspections. The personal protection equipment must be stored in a geographic area and manner for quick distribution to volunteers when needed for wildland fire suppression.

(3) For purposes of this section, "volunteers" means qualified individuals who are not affiliated with a fire department or district and who perform fire suppression activities for the department without any expectation of compensation. The department must require proof of adequate training and possession of valid incident qualifications, such as those commonly known as "red cards" or "blue cards" before allowing any volunteer to assist the department in fire suppression activities.

(4) Qualified volunteers identified in subsection (3) of this section may be dispatched to support wildland fire suppression efforts through the coordinated resource ordering systems of local or state firefighting organizations. Volunteers are prohibited from independently assigning themselves to wildfires without an official resource order.

(5) By December 31, 2016, and December 31, 2017, the department must report to the legislature on the resources required to implement and maintain the requirements of this section, the number of volunteers provided equipment under this section, and any recommendations for improvement. For efficiency, the department may include the report required in this section as part of the report on the forest health and wildfire management strategic plan, as required under section 101(3) of this act.

(6) Nothing in this section prohibits the department from conducting condensed safety training on the site of a wildland fire in order to utilize available volunteers.

(7) No civil liability may be imposed by any court on the state or its officers and employees for any adverse impacts resulting from the training, equipping, or dispatching of volunteers under the provisions of this section except upon proof of gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct."

Renumber the remaining sections consecutively and correct any internal references accordingly.

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|  | EFFECT:  Requires the department of natural resources to provide personal protection equipment at no cost to up to 100 trained, qualified volunteers not associated with a local fire district or fire department. Requires the department to report the legislature in 2016 and 2017 on the number of volunteers participating in the program and the resources required to maintain to the program. |

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