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**ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6548**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Senate State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Palumbo and Van De Wege)

AN ACT Relating to establishing the joint legislative task force on fire service administration; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that the administration of emergency response and fire suppression services in Washington state is fragmented at the statewide level with responsibilities being fulfilled by the state patrol, the state military department, and the department of natural resources among many other governmental and private entities. It is the intent of the legislature to examine this current administrative structure and division of responsibilities and to recommend improvements which are intended to streamline, consolidate, and increase the efficiency of Washington's fire suppression and emergency response services.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) A joint legislative task force on fire service administration is established, with members as provided in this subsection.

(a) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

(b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives.

(c) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives jointly shall appoint members representing the following:

(i) Washington state patrol;

(ii) Washington state military department;

(iii) Washington state department of natural resources;

(iv) Washington state council of firefighters;

(v) Washington fire chiefs;

(vi) Washington state firefighters' association;

(vii) Washington fire commissioners association;

(viii) Association of Washington cities;

(ix) Washington state association of counties;

(x) Washington federally recognized Indian tribes;

(xi) Washington environmental proponents;

(xii) Timber interests;

(xiii) Private fire contractors; and

(xiv) the state ethnic and diversity commissions.

(d) The governor shall appoint one member representing the Washington forest practices board.

(2) The task force shall:

(a) Request the participation of and consult with: The United States forest service, the bureau of land management, and the United States parks service.

(b) Review and assess the current structure and responsibilities for providing fire and nonpolice emergency response services within Washington state.

(c) Review and assess the current structure and responsibilities for providing fire and nonpolice emergency response services in other western states.

(d) Make recommendations for improving the structure and efficiency of Washington's response administration and hierarchy.

(e) Make recommendations on establishing fire protection for areas that do not have any protection.

(f) Make recommendations on regionalizing and consolidating fire protection jurisdictions.

(g) Make recommendations about the adequacy and stability of fire service funding.

(h) Make recommendations related to the adequacy of existing communication systems.

(i) Review the department of natural resources' wildland fire protection strategic plan and give due consideration to the strategies, findings, and recommendations contained in the plan in preparing its report.

(3) The task force shall choose its cochairs from among its legislative membership, which must include one representative from the house of representatives and one senator from the senate. The legislative membership shall convene the initial meeting of the task force no later than July 1, 2018. The task force shall convene at least four meetings.

(4) The task force shall submit a report, which may include findings and recommendations, to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2019. A minority report must be submitted along with the task force's report if requested by any member of the task force.

(5) Staff support for the task force shall be provided by the senate committee services and the house of representatives office of program research.

(6) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

(7) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the senate and the house of representatives. Task force expenditures are subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their successor committees.

(8) This section expires December 31, 2019.

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