
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2553

Brief Description: Adjusting assessments levied on hardwood processors.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake, Orcutt, Morris and Hargrove.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Replaces the current hardwood processor assessment schedule with an assessment rate of 4 cents per ton produced.
- Allows the assessment to be adjusted annually beginning July 1, 2019, to reflect the percentage change in the implicit price deflator for personal consumption expenditures.

Hearing Date: 1/24/18

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

In 1990, the Legislature authorized the creation of a Washington Hardwoods Commission (Commission) to foster the growth and development of the hardwood industry in Washington. The Commission is comprised of seven members, all of whom are members of the hardwood industry. The Commission must assist in the retention, expansion, and attraction of hardwood-related industries by creating a climate for development and support of the industry. The Commission must coordinate efforts to enhance and promote the expansion of the forest industry among state and federal agencies, industry organizations, and institutions of higher education. The Commission has a duty to develop an enhancement and protection program that will reduce waste and respect environmental sensitivity. The Commission must also work cooperatively with the Department of Natural Resources in the development of best management practices for hardwood resources.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

To provide for permanent funding of the Commission, an assessment schedule is set in statute based on the hardwood processor's quarterly production by weight. The Commission may develop formulas to convert other measurements to tons of production.

Assessments made by the Commission are personal debts and if a person fails to pay, the Commission may add up to 10 percent of the assessment to defray costs of enforcement. Civil action by the Commission may be brought against persons who fail to pay.

Summary of Bill:

The current assessment schedule is replaced with an assessment rate of 4 cents per ton produced. Beginning July 1, the assessment rate must be adjusted annually based on the implicit price deflator for personal expenditures for the United States as published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the federal Department of Commerce by September 25 of the year before assessments are payable.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2018.

Effective Date: July 1, 2018