
SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5546

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hawkins, McCoy, Fortunato, Pearson, Braun, Sheldon, Rivers, and O'Ban)

READ FIRST TIME 02/24/17.

1 AN ACT Relating to proactively addressing wildfire risk by
2 creating a forest health treatment assessment; adding a new section
3 to chapter 76.06 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an
4 expiration date.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 76.06
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) The department must establish a forest health assessment and
9 treatment framework designed to proactively and systematically
10 address the forest health issues facing the state. Specifically, the
11 framework must endeavor to achieve an initial goal of assessing and
12 treating one million acres of land by 2033.

13 (2) The department must utilize the framework to assess and treat
14 acreage in an incremental fashion each biennium. The framework
15 consists of three elements: Assessment; treatment; and progress
16 review and reporting.

17 (a) Assessment. Each biennium, the department must identify and
18 assess two hundred thousand acres of fire prone lands and communities
19 that are in need of forest health treatment, including the use of
20 prescribed fire or mechanical treatment, such as thinning.

1 (i) The scope of the assessment must include lands protected by
2 the department as well as lands outside of the department's fire
3 protection responsibilities that could pose a high risk to department
4 protected lands during a fire.

5 (ii) The assessment must identify areas in need of treatment, the
6 type or types of treatment recommended, data and planning needs to
7 carry out recommended treatment, and the estimated cost of
8 recommended treatment.

9 (b) Treatment. Each biennium, the department must review
10 previously completed assessments and prioritize and conduct as many
11 identified treatments as possible using appropriations provided for
12 that specific purpose.

13 (c) Progress review and reporting. By December 1st of each even-
14 numbered year, the department must provide the appropriate committees
15 of the legislature and the office of financial management with:

16 (i) A request for appropriations designed to implement the
17 framework in the following biennium, including assessment work and
18 conducting treatments identified in previously completed assessments;

19 (ii) A prioritized list and brief summary of treatments planned
20 to be conducted under the framework with the requested
21 appropriations, including relevant information from the assessment;
22 and

23 (iii) A list and brief summary of treatments carried out under
24 the framework in the preceding biennium, including total funding
25 available, costs for completed treatment, and treatment outcomes. The
26 summary must include any barriers to framework implementation and
27 legislative or administrative recommendations to address those
28 barriers.

29 (3) In developing and implementing the framework, the department
30 must:

31 (a) Utilize and build on the forest health strategic planning
32 initiated under section 308(11), chapter 36, Laws of 2016 sp. sess.,
33 to the maximum extent practicable, to promote the efficient use of
34 resources; and

35 (b) Establish a forest health advisory committee to assist in
36 developing and implementing the framework. The committee may: (i)
37 Include representation from large and small forest landowners,
38 wildland fire response organizations, milling and log transportation
39 industries, forest collaboratives that may exist in the affected
40 areas, highly affected communities and community preparedness

1 organizations, conservation groups, and other interested parties
2 deemed appropriate by the commissioner; and (ii) consult with
3 relevant local, state, and federal agencies, and tribes.

4 (4) The department must establish and implement the forest health
5 assessment and treatment framework within the appropriations
6 specifically provided for this purpose.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) In order to expedite initial
8 implementation of the forest health assessment and treatment
9 framework, the department of natural resources: (a) May prioritize
10 and treat lands identified in its 2017-2019 biennial budget request
11 as pilot treatment projects in lieu of the requirements of section
12 1(2) (a) and (b) of this act; and (b) must conduct assessments in the
13 2017-2019 biennium for prioritization and treatment in the 2019-2021
14 biennium.

15 (2) The department of natural resources must establish and
16 implement the forest health assessment and treatment framework within
17 the appropriations specifically provided for this purpose.

18 (3) This section expires June 30, 2019.

--- END ---