
**Rural Development, Agriculture, &
Natural Resources Committee**

HB 2528

Brief Description: Recognizing the contributions of the state's forest products sector as part of the state's global climate response.

Sponsors: Representatives Ramos, DeBolt, Chapman, Boehnke, Blake, Fitzgibbon, Tharinger and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- States the intention of the Legislature to support industry sectors that act as sequesterers of carbon.
- Establishes the Forest Carbon Reforestation and Afforestation Account (Account) in the custody of the State Treasurer.
- Directs the State Conservation Commission to use moneys in the Account as grants to private landowners to advance the state's carbon sequestration goals.
- Directs the Department of Commerce to actively promote markets for the state's forest products.

Hearing Date: 1/28/20

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

In 2008, Washington enacted legislation that set a series of limits on the emission of greenhouse gases within the state. The Department of Ecology is responsible for monitoring and tracking the state's progress toward the emission limits. That legislation also stated the Legislature's intention to maintain Washington's leadership on climate change by taking certain specified actions.

State Conservation Commission.

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.

The State Conservation Commission provides fiscal, technical, and program assistance to the state's 47 local conservation districts to carry out local projects and represents the local conservation district perspective within state government. In turn, conservation districts are special local government districts authorized to engage in a variety of activities relating to the conservation of soil, water, and other natural resources.

Summary of Bill:

The scope of actions that Washington should take in order to continue its leadership on climate change policy is expanded to include maintaining and enhancing the state's ability to continue to sequester carbon through forest products. The Legislature intends that the state will support industry sectors that act as sequesterers of carbon.

It is stated as the policy of the state to support the complete forest products sector, which includes landowners, mills, bioenergy, pulp and paper, and the related harvesting and transportation infrastructure.

It is also stated as the policy of the state to utilize net flux stock-change carbon accounting principles consistent with the reporting guidelines on land use, land use change, and forestry as established for greenhouse gas reporting by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and as used in the United States' national greenhouse gas reporting inventories.

Any state carbon programs must support the policies stated in the act and must recognize the forest product industry's contribution to the state's climate response.

The Forest Carbon Reforestation and Afforestation Account (Account) is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. The State Conservation Commission must use all moneys in the Account, less reasonable administration costs, as grants to any private landowner or organization that works with private landowners to advance the state's carbon sequestration goals. Allowable grant projects are:

- Funding for reforestation of forestlands after a wildfire for which the landowner was not responsible;
- Funding for afforestation projects to return fallow land capable of supporting trees to a working forest; and
- Funding to plant sustainable forested buffers along otherwise nonforested fish bearing streams.

All recipients of funding from the Account must agree in contract, as a condition of funding, to maintain all reforested or afforested land in forested uses for a minimum of 50 years.

The Commission may also use funds in the Account to conduct an opportunity analysis of land in Washington to determine how many acres of deforested land could be returned to working forests without having an effect on food production.

The Department of Commerce must actively promote markets for the state's forest products. Promotion of forest products includes any products of an indivisible industry sector necessary for the maintenance and expansion of the sector including, but not limited to, saw logs, dimensional

lumber, mass timber and other engineered wood products, bioenergy, and pulp and paper and other wood biomass-derived products.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.