

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5626

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the hardwood commission.

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to the hardwood commission.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Environment & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Senators McMullen, Amondson and Snyder; by request of Washington Hardwoods Commission).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Trade & Economic Development, April 4, 1991, DP;
Passed House, April 16, 1991, 97-0;
Passed Legislature, 97-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 11 members:
Representatives Cantwell, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair;
Forner, Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff, Assistant
Ranking Minority Member; Ferguson; Kremen; Ludwig; Moyer;
Rasmussen; Riley; and Roland.

Staff: Bill Watterson (786-7349).

Background: The Washington Hardwoods Commission was established in 1990 to assist in the retention, expansion, and attraction of hardwood-related industries. The commission is to coordinate state and federal agencies, industry organizations, and higher education institutions. The commission has the power to develop products and markets for hardwood, recommend a tax program to help stabilize existing firms and attract new firms, develop programs that protect the environment, and develop financial assistance programs.

The forest products industry is a key part of Washington's economy. Approximately one-fifth of the manufacturing jobs in the state are forest products related.

Historically, this industry has relied on softwood timber as its primary source of raw materials. Hardwood timber, such

as alder, has been used less frequently as a raw material. During the past 10 years the annual average harvest of hardwood timber in Washington has been 231 million board feet while an annual average of 6 billion board feet of softwood has been harvested. However, as softwood inventories have been declining, hardwood inventories have been increasing.

Summary of Bill: Members of the Washington Hardwoods Commission shall be compensated at the standard rate for members of a class three part-time commission.

The commission levies an assessment on hardwood processors based on the processor's production, in thousands of tons, per calendar quarter. Assessments are a personal debt of every person assessed and collection methods are provided.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: Collection of assessments on hardwood production will allow the Washington Hardwoods Commission to assist in the retention, expansion, and attraction of hardwood-related industries.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Merlin Smith, Washington Hardwoods Commission (in favor of bill).