

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6272

*As Reported By House Committee on:
State Government*

Title: An act relating to mobilization of fire service resources.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington state fire services mobilization plan.

Sponsor(s): By Senate Committee on Governmental Operations (originally sponsored by Senators McCaslin, Madsen, Sutherland, Matson and Roach).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, February 26, 1992, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
STATE GOVERNMENT**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 10 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Pruitt, Vice Chair; McLean, Ranking Minority Member; Bowman, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler; R. Fisher; Grant; Moyer; O'Brien; and Sheldon.

Staff: Linda May (786-7135).

Background: Responsibility for fire control is divided among local fire departments, the Fire Protection Services Division of the Department of Community Development (DCD), and the Division of Fire Control in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). While there are some mutual aid agreements in place among local jurisdictions to provide for the sharing of resources, there is no statewide plan in place for the mobilization of fire-fighting resources on a larger scale.

Summary of Amended Bill: For the purposes of this act, the state is divided into seven regions, and a regional fire defense board is created within each region. Each regional board is to develop a regional fire service plan that includes provisions for organized fire agencies to respond to fires or other disasters across municipal, county, or regional boundaries. Each regional plan is to be consistent with the incident command system, the state fire services

mobilization plan, and other regional response plans already adopted and in use in the state. Counties within the regions and DNR select the members of the regional fire defense boards; these members serve in a voluntary capacity and are not eligible for reimbursement from the state for meeting-related expenses.

A state fire defense board is created, comprised of the state fire marshal, a representative from DNR, and a representative from each of the regional fire defense boards. The state board is to develop the Washington state fire services mobilization plan, which shall include the procedures to be used during fire emergencies for coordinating local, regional, and state fire jurisdiction resources. The state board will also approve each regional fire service plan. Members serving on the state board also do so in a voluntary capacity and are not eligible for reimbursement for meeting-related expenses.

The director of DCD is to review the state fire services mobilization plan, recommend any necessary changes, and then approve the fire services plan for inclusion in the state's comprehensive emergency management plan. The director has the responsibility to mobilize jurisdictions under the state fire services mobilization plan.

DCD in consultation with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) is to develop procedures to facilitate reimbursement to jurisdictions from appropriate federal and state funds when the director mobilizes jurisdictions under the state fire services plan.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amendment places the duties of the regional boards and the state board in separate sections. In the Senate bill, the director of DCD appoints members to the regional boards; in the amendment, the counties appoint their own members. The amendment requires that the plans drafted by the regional boards be consistent with the state plan and with regional response plans and systems already in use in the state. The amendment states expressly that members on the regional boards are serving in a voluntary capacity and are not eligible for meeting-related expenses.

In the Senate bill, the state fire defense board advises the director of DCD on the state plan, which the state fire marshal drafts. In the amendment, the state fire defense board drafts the state plan. The state board also approves each regional plan. The director has the authority to mobilize jurisdictions under the plan. State board members serve in a voluntary capacity and are not eligible for reimbursement for meeting-related expenses.

The Senate bill adds new sections to the chapter of law dealing with emergency management. The amendment creates a new chapter in the same title. The director is to review the plan prepared by the state fire defense board, recommend any necessary changes, and then approve the state fire services plan for inclusion in the state's comprehensive emergency management plan.

The Senate bill gives the director of DCD the authority to hire new employees for this program, creates a new account in the state treasury, and has the director request an appropriation each year. The amendment does not include these provisions. Instead, DCD and OFM are to develop procedures for reimbursing jurisdictions when they are mobilized under the state fire services plan.

Fiscal Note: Requested on similar measure HB 2624 on January 30, 1992.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The idea of planning for the mobilization of fire resources is very important. The proposed striking amendment is a good one and makes important changes to the bill.

Testimony Against: The Senate bill calls for an appropriation to reimburse fire districts after a mobilization under the plan. The language in the striking amendment regarding reimbursement offers less security to fire districts.

Witnesses: Otto Jensen, Association of Fire Chiefs; Elaine Rose, City of Seattle (both in favor of bill with amendment); and Pete Spiller, Fire Commissioners Association (in favor of bill without amendment).