

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6160

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES,
FEBRUARY 4, 1992**

Brief Description: Introducing incentives to maintain the forest land base.

SPONSORS: Senators Amondson, Snyder, Metcalf, Oke, Anderson, Sutherland and Bauer; by request of Department of Natural Resources

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6160 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Metcalf, Chairman; Oke, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Barr, and Owen.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Hearing Dates: January 30, 1992; February 4, 1992

BACKGROUND:

The Commissioner of Public Lands established the Sustainable Forestry Roundtable in 1990. The Roundtable sought to create a balance between incentives to maintain land in forestry and regulation to protect public resources and to provide for controls over forest practices. The Forest Practices Board is working toward the adoption of a package of regulatory changes that include wetland protection, accounting for accumulative effects of forest practices, and wildlife protection.

SUMMARY:

Forest landowners may charge an access fee and still have limited liability. A right to practice forestry is established by expanding the protection from nuisance lawsuits in a manner similar to those allowed for agricultural practices. Incentives to retain standing snags in upland areas and provide debris in streams for wildlife and fish habitat are encouraged and no liability will occur from this practice. Forest lands are exempt from special assessments of local improvement districts. A mediation process is established and frivolous appeals will be discouraged by an application fee of \$100. A multipractice application with a two year term for the forest practice permit is extended from one to two years.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

A section exempting forest lands from real estate excise transaction tax is removed. The effective date for the two year forest practices permit is August 1, 1992.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

The incentives are necessary to give certainty to the forest industry and to complement the Forest Practices Board's actions.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Bob Gustavson, Washington Forest Protection Association; Jeff Parsons, National Audubon Society; Craig Beals, Champion International