

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1245

As of March 17, 2003

Title: An act relating to the authority of the department of natural resources to contract for the harvest of timber from state trust lands.

Brief Description: Establishing contract harvesting of timber on state trust lands.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Linville, Schoesler, Rockefeller, Sump, Orcutt, Eickmeyer, Quall and Mielke; by request of Commissioner of Public Lands).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Energy & Water: 3/20/03.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & WATER

Staff: Victor Moon (786-7469)

Background: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sells timber from state forest lands by putting tracts of timber up for bid. DNR will establish an appraised value for the timber, and this value becomes the minimum bid for the timber sale. The successful bidder who is awarded the contract generally has three years to harvest the timber from the sale.

DNR is authorized to sell standing timber, which is harvested and sorted by the winning bidder. DNR is not authorized to contract with a third party to harvest and process the timber so that DNR can sell sorted logs.

Summary of Bill: DNR has the authority to directly contract for the removal of up to 10 percent of the total annual volume of timber offered for sale from state forest lands. All contracts entered into must be compatible with the Office of Financial Management's guide to public service contracts.

The Board of Natural Resources (Board) is directed to determine if any special appraisal practices are necessary for logs sold under the contract harvesting authority. This process must consider procedures for rapidly marketing any logs that fail to receive a bid at auction. The Board must also provide for a list of approved certified contract harvesters from which DNR can contract. Any harvester not appearing on the list of approved harvesters must be allowed to appeal his or her exclusion from the list.

The Contract Harvesting Revolving Account is created to receive all receipts from the gross proceeds of logs that are harvested under the contract harvesting program. The funds in the account can only be used to pay harvesting costs incurred on contract harvesting sales, and may only be authorized by the Commissioner of Public Lands or his or her designee. The Board has oversight of the account, and no legislative appropriation is needed for expenditures from the account. All interest created by the account is deposited into the

account, but the account may not exceed \$1 million. Moneys in excess of \$1 million must be disbursed to the trust beneficiaries in accordance with existing procedures.

After the gross proceeds from the sale of logs that were harvested under contract are deposited into the contract harvesting revolving account, the harvesting costs are deducted from the gross proceeds and kept in the account. The final receipt of gross proceeds on a contract sale must be kept in the account until all required costs for that sale are paid. The net proceeds from the sale are paid to the State Treasurer for distribution in the appropriate trust accounts after the authorized deductions are made.

DNR must provide a report to the Legislature by December 31, 2006, that summarizes the costs and effectiveness of the contract harvesting program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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