

6144

Sponsor(s): Senators Morton and Deccio

Brief Description: Developing a statewide plan to address forest health.

SB 6144 - DIGEST

(SUBSTITUTED FOR - SEE 2ND SUB)

Requires that the commissioner and the department develop and pursue approval of cooperative agreements with the United States forest service and the United States bureau of land management using Title 1 of the national environmental policy act of 1969, as amended, specifically using sections 101, 102, 103, 104, and 105.

Declares that the purpose of these agreements is to enable the department to effectively participate in land management plans that could affect the department's strategic plan for healthy forests and effective fire prevention and suppression. Such government-to-government cooperation is vital if the condition of the state's public and private forest lands are to be protected.

Directs the commissioner to report to the chairs of the house of representatives and senate natural resources committees every six months on progress under this act.

Finds that Washington faces serious forest health problems where forest land is overcrowded with trees infested with or susceptible to insects, diseases, wind, and fire.

Creates a work group to study opportunities to improve the forest health issues enumerated in this act and to develop a strategic plan.

Directs the department of natural resources to initiate a pilot project in the Loomis state forest in 2004 to explore the use of stewardship contracts similar to those used by the United States forest service. The contracts must be used to restore healthy timber stocking levels and timber stand conditions on state trust lands.

Makes appropriations to carry out the purposes of the act.