

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5179

As Passed Senate, February 8, 2006

Title: An act relating to forest health.

Brief Description: Studying forest health issues.

Sponsors: Senators Morton, Jacobsen, Sheldon and Stevens.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/24/05, 1/27/05 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/3/05, 47-0; 2/8/06, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Fraser, Hargrove, Morton, Oke, Spanel and Swecker.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: The 2004 Legislature created a work group to study forest health issues and to report back to the Legislature in December 2004. The work group, which is staffed by the Department of Natural Resources, has prepared its report as well as drafting proposed legislation. Due to the short time frame, statewide public hearings have not been held on the proposed legislation. The work group expired at the end of 2005.

Summary of Bill: The forest health work group is recreated and is authorized to conduct at least five hearings statewide to gather and report on public input. The work group expires June 30, 2007.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Emergency Clause.

Testimony For: The forest health work group has prepared a report for the Legislature and has developed a legislative proposal. The work group would like to conduct hearings in various locations throughout the state and bring the proposal and the public comments back to the 2006 Legislature.

Testimony Against: The report should be peer reviewed since it does not reflect all of the environmental concerns.

Who Testified: PRO: Pat McElroy, Department of Natural Resources.

CON: Mike Ryherd, Northwest Ecosystems Alliance.