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ENGROSSED SENATE BILL 5179

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State of Washington

59th Legislature

2006 Regular Session

By Senators Morton, Jacobsen, Sheldon and Stevens

Read first time 01/17/2005. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation.

1 AN ACT Relating to forest health; creating a new section; providing  
2 an expiration date; and declaring an emergency.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) A work group is created to study  
5 opportunities to improve the forest health issues enumerated in RCW  
6 76.06.140 that are facing forest land in Washington and to help the  
7 commissioner of public lands develop a strategic plan under section 3,  
8 chapter 218, Laws of 2004. The work group may, if deemed necessary,  
9 identify and focus on regions of the state where forest health issues  
10 enumerated in section 1 of this act are the most critical.

11 (2)(a) The work group is comprised of individuals selected on the  
12 basis of their knowledge of forests, forest ecology, or forest health  
13 issues and, if determined by the commissioner of public lands to be  
14 necessary, should represent a mix of individuals with knowledge  
15 regarding specific regions of the state. Members of the work group  
16 shall be appointed by the commissioner of public lands, unless  
17 otherwise specified, and shall include:

18 (i) The commissioner of public lands or the commissioner's  
19 designee, who shall serve as chair;

1 (ii) A representative of a statewide industrial timber landowner's  
2 group;

3 (iii) A landowner representative from the small forest landowner  
4 advisory committee established in RCW 76.13.110;

5 (iv) A representative of a college within a state university that  
6 specializes in forestry or natural resources science;

7 (v) A representative of an environmental organization;

8 (vi) A representative of a county that has within its borders  
9 state-owned forest lands that are known to suffer from the forest  
10 health deficiencies enumerated in RCW 76.06.140;

11 (vii) A representative of the Washington state department of fish  
12 and wildlife;

13 (viii) A forest hydrologist, an entomologist, and a fire ecologist,  
14 if available;

15 (ix) A representative of the governor appointed by the governor;  
16 and

17 (x) A representative of a professional forestry organization.

18 (b) In addition to the membership of the work group outlined in  
19 this section, the commissioner of public lands shall also invite the  
20 full and equal participation of:

21 (i) A representative of a tribal government located in a region of  
22 the state where the forest health issues enumerated in RCW 76.06.140  
23 are present; and

24 (ii) A representative of both the United States forest service and  
25 the United States fish and wildlife service stationed to work primarily  
26 in Washington.

27 (3) The work group shall:

28 (a) Determine whether the goals and requirements of chapter 76.06  
29 RCW are being met with regard to the identification, designation, and  
30 reduction of significant forest insect and disease threats to public  
31 and private forest resources, and whether the provisions of chapter  
32 76.06 RCW are the most effective and appropriate way to address forest  
33 health issues;

34 (b) Study what incentives could be used to assist landowners with  
35 the costs of creating and maintaining forest health;

36 (c) Identify opportunities and barriers for improved prevention of  
37 losses of public and private resources to forest insects, diseases,  
38 wind, and fire;

1 (d) Assist the commissioner in developing a strategic plan under  
2 section 3, chapter 218, Laws of 2004 for increasing forest resistance  
3 and resilience to forest insects, disease, wind, and fire in  
4 Washington;

5 (e) Develop funding alternatives for consideration by the  
6 legislature;

7 (f) Explore possible opportunities for the state to enter into  
8 cooperative agreements with the federal government, or other avenues  
9 for the state to provide input on the management of federally owned  
10 land in Washington;

11 (g) Develop recommendations for the proper treatment of infested  
12 and fire and wind damaged forests on public and private lands within  
13 the context of working with interdisciplinary teams under the forest  
14 practices act to ensure that forest health is achieved with the  
15 protection of fish, wildlife, and other public resources;

16 (h) Analyze the state noxious weed control statutes and procedures  
17 (chapter 17.10 RCW) and the extreme hazard regulations adopted under  
18 the forest protection laws, to determine if the policies and procedures  
19 of these laws are applicable, or could serve as a model to support  
20 improved forest health; and

21 (i) Recommend whether the work group should be extended beyond the  
22 time that the required report has been submitted.

23 (4) The work group shall submit to the department of natural  
24 resources and the appropriate standing committees of the legislature,  
25 no later than December 30, 2006, its findings and recommendations for  
26 legislation that is necessary to implement the findings.

27 (5) The department of natural resources shall provide technical and  
28 staff support from existing staff for the work group created by this  
29 section.

30 (6) The work group is required to hold a minimum of five meetings,  
31 at diverse locations throughout the state, to gather public input  
32 regarding the group's proposed legislation.

33 (7) This section expires June 30, 2007.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
35 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the

1 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect  
2 immediately.

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