

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4006

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Brief Description: Requesting the federal government consider ways to increase the amount of timber and fiber removed from federal land in Washington.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake, Newhouse, B. Sullivan, Orcutt, Eickmeyer, Hinkle, Kessler and Kretz.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/19/07, 2/22/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requests the United States Forest Service and the federal government to consider ways to increase the amount of timber and fiber that is removed from federal forest lands located within the borders of Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Blake, Vice Chair; Kretz, Ranking Minority Member; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Eickmeyer, Grant, Hailey, Kagi, Lantz, McCoy, Newhouse, Orcutt, Strow and VanDeWege.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The United States Forest Service (USFS) manages six national forests and one volcanic monument within Washington's borders. The USFS manages national forests for multiple uses, including forestry research, natural resource protection, providing technical assistance, and the extraction of timber resources. The mission of the USFS is limited to land management, and the agency generally relies on the public sector to harvest and process the timber removed from federal lands.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The USFS is housed administratively within the United States Department of Agriculture, and the current USFS Chief is Gail Kimbell, an alumni of Oregon State University and a former district ranger of the Colville National Forest.

Summary of Bill:

The USFS and the federal government is requested by the Legislature to consider ways to increase the amount of timber and fiber that is removed from federal forest lands located within the borders of Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The lack of production off of federal land is causing a problem with the chip and fiber supply for mills in the state. The lack of management of second, third, and fourth growth forests on federal land causes problems for forest health and wildlife habitat. Converting trees into lumber helps reduce atmospheric carbon by locking up the carbon in wood, where it is released into the atmosphere through decay on a slower timeline than if the wood was not processed into building materials. When forests are not managed, forest fires are much more likely.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Blake, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.