

**SB 6028 - DIGEST**

Provides that the department has the lead role in developing a comprehensive forest health program to achieve the goals of this act. Within available funding, the department shall: (1) Develop, gather, and disseminate information on forest health conditions, monitor forest health conditions and changes over time, and coordinate and enter agreements with interested and affected parties;

(2) Coordinate with universities, university extension services, federal and state agencies, private, public, and tribal forest landowners, consulting foresters, and forest managers to monitor forest fuel buildup, forest insect and disease outbreaks, and wind and ice storm events; and

(3) Coordinate with universities, university extension services, and state and federal agencies to provide education and technical assistance to private, public, and tribal forest landowners on silvicultural and forest management science, techniques, and technology to maintain forests in conditions that are resistant to disturbance agents.

Requires forest health issues to be addressed by a tiered system.

(1) The first tier is intended to maintain forest health and protect forests from disturbance agents through the voluntary efforts of landowners. Tier 1 is the desired status. Consistent with landowner objectives and the protection of public resources, forests should be managed in ways that create, restore, or maintain healthy forest ecosystems so that disturbance agents occur or exist at nonepidemic levels. To the extent of available funding, information and technical assistance will be made available to forest landowners so they can plan for and implement necessary forest health maintenance and restoration activities.

(2) The second tier is intended to manage the development of threats to forest health, or contain or suppress existing threats to forest health, due to disturbance agents. Actions by landowners to address such threats to forest health are voluntary except as required under chapter 76.04 RCW to reduce the danger of the spread of fire. Actions suggested to reduce threats to forest health are specified in forest health hazard warnings issued by the commissioner of public lands under this act. Within available funding, site-specific information, technical assistance, and project coordination services shall be offered as determined appropriate by the department.

(3) The third tier is intended to address significant threats to forest health due to disturbance agents that have spread to multiple forest ownerships or increased forest fuel that is likely to further the spread of fire. Actions required to reduce significant threats to forest health are specified in forest health hazard orders issued by the commissioner of

public lands under this act. Within available funding, site-specific information, technical assistance, and project coordination services shall be offered as determined appropriate by the department. Landowners who are provided notice of a forest health hazard order under this act and fail to take the action required under such order may be subject to increased liability for the spread of fire as described in RCW 76.04.495 and 76.04.660.

Repeals provisions of chapter 76.06 RCW.