S-4540.1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6489**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Becker, Liias, Rivers, Bailey, Parlette, Braun, Angel, Brown, Schoesler, Warnick, Honeyford, Dammeier, Pearson, Billig, King, and Hewitt)

AN ACT Relating to fire suppression volunteers; and adding a new section to chapter 76.04 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 76.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) To maximize the effective utilization of qualified wildland fire suppression volunteers, the department is required to:

(a) Compile and maintain a master list of qualified wildland fire suppression volunteers who have valid incident qualifications for the kind of volunteer work to be performed. In order to be included on a master list of qualified wildland fire suppression volunteers:

(i) Volunteers in fire crews must have adequate training and qualifications, including possessing a valid incident qualification card, commonly called a red card;

(ii) Volunteers other than those identified in (a)(i) of this subsection must have training and qualifications evidenced by possession of a valid department qualification and safety document, commonly called a blue card; and

(iii) Volunteers identified in (a)(i) and (ii) of this subsection must be registered as qualifying fire suppression volunteers with the department;

(b) Create and make available a process by which potential volunteers may register with the department. Registration must be made available free of charge. As part of the registration process, the department may require proof of adequate training and relevant fire suppression-related qualifications or certifications;

(c) Make the lists of qualified wildland fire suppression volunteers available to county legislative authorities, emergency management departments, and local fire districts, and provide those entities training on the process for ordering volunteers through established coordinated resource ordering systems of local or state firefighting organizations;

(d) Cooperate with federal wildland firefighting agencies to maximize, based on predicted need, the efficient use of local resources in close proximity to wildland fire incidents;

(e) Provide all necessary safety and fire suppression equipment at no cost to each volunteer when the volunteer is dispatched to fire suppression duty. If the department cannot provide the necessary safety and fire suppression equipment, it must offer to reimburse any volunteer who purchases new equipment suitable for the kind of volunteer work to be performed. If the volunteer accepts reimbursement, he or she must surrender the equipment for which he or she was reimbursed when the volunteer period comes to an end; and

(f) Maintain its inventory of safety and fire suppression equipment for volunteers in good condition and conduct periodic inspections to ensure safety. The safety and fire suppression equipment must be stored in a geographic area and manner such that it is easily distributed to volunteers without delay when needed for fire suppression.

(2) The volunteers identified in subsection (1)(a) of this section may be dispatched to support wildland fire suppression efforts through the coordinated resource ordering systems of local or state firefighting organizations. Volunteers are prohibited from independently assigning themselves to wildfires without an official resource order.

(3) Nothing in subsection (1) of this section prohibits the department from conducting condensed safety training on the site of a wildland fire in order to utilize available volunteers not included on a master list of qualified wildland fire suppression volunteers.

(4) For purposes of this section, "volunteers" means qualified individuals performing fire suppression activities for the department without any expectation of compensation.

(5) No civil liability may be imposed by any court on the state or its officers and employees for any adverse impacts resulting from the department training, listing, or dispatching of volunteers under the provisions of this section except upon proof of gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.

**--- END ---**