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**SENATE BILL 5546**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Hawkins, McCoy, Fortunato, Pearson, Braun, Sheldon, Rivers, and O'Ban

AN ACT Relating to proactively addressing wildfire risk by creating a forest health treatment assessment; and adding a new section to chapter 76.06 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 76.06 RCW to read as follows:

(1)(a) The department must develop a statewide assessment of fire-prone lands that are in need of forest health treatment, including through prescribed fire or mechanical treatment such as thinning.

(b) The scope of the assessment must include lands protected by the department as well as lands outside of the department's fire protection responsibilities that pose a high risk to department protected lands during a fire.

(c) The assessment must identify areas in need of treatment, the type or types of treatment recommended, and the estimated cost of recommended treatment. The department must design the assessment and illustrative mapping in the manner it deems most efficient and effective in treatment planning and implementation.

(2) Based on the assessment, the department must establish forest health treatment goals and design a planning framework designed to achieve completion of the identified forest health treatments by 2033. The framework must include prioritization criteria, a recommended workflow for identified treatments and any necessary retreatment or maintenance, a method to account for changing risks over time, a process for coordination with willing landowners on identified treatments that cross ownerships, and a recommended process for plan implementation.

(3) In developing the assessment and establishing the goals and planning framework, the department must:

(a) To promote the efficient use of resources, utilize and build on the forest health strategic planning initiated under section 308(11), chapter 36, Laws of 2016 sp. sess. to the maximum extent practicable; and

(b) Work in consultation with relevant local, state, and federal agencies, tribes, forest landowners, representatives from milling and log transportation industries, and other interested parties from the conservation and commercial sectors.

(4) By October 1st of each even-numbered year, the department must provide the appropriate committees of the legislature and the office of financial management with:

(a) A request for appropriations designed to carry out forest health treatments during the upcoming biennium that are consistent with the forest health treatment goals and framework established by the department;

(b) A prioritized list and brief summary of forest health treatments the department intends to carry out in the upcoming biennium with the requested appropriations, including the relevant information from the assessment; and

(c) A list and brief summary of forest health treatments the department carried out in the preceding biennium, including total funding available, costs for completed treatment, and treatment outcomes. The summary must include any barriers to plan implementation and legislative or administrative recommendations to address those barriers.

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