H-1256.1

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**HOUSE BILL 1894**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Dent and Griffey

AN ACT Relating to additional temporary duties for the wildland fire advisory committee; and amending 2018 c 227 s 1 (uncodified).

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

**Sec.**  2018 c 227 s 1 (uncodified) is amended to read as follows:

(1) Subject to amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the commissioner of public lands must direct the wildland fire advisory committee established in RCW 76.04.179 to review, analyze, and make recommendations on the following issues related to wild fire prevention, response, and suppression activities within our state:

(a) The committee, with the assistance of department of natural resources' personnel, must approximately quantify the areas in the state that are not contained within an established fire district nor subject to a planned fire response and make recommendations as to how these areas could be protected as well as a source of funding for any recommended activities. In doing so, the committee must, in time for inclusion in the December 31, 2018, status report: Review the relevant recommendations contained in the joint legislative audit and review committee's 2017 final report on fees assessed for forest fire protection; analyze and develop recommendations on potential administrative and legislative actions including, for example, the process proposed in chapter . . . (Substitute Senate Bill No. 6575), Laws of 2018; and consult with any relevant stakeholders, as deemed necessary by the committee, that are not represented on the committee.

(b) The committee must examine the value of community programs that educate homeowners and engage in preventive projects within wild fire risk communities, such as firewise, and make recommendations on whether these programs should be advanced, and if so, how, including potential sources of ongoing funding for the programs.

(c) The committee must also develop plans to help protect non-English speaking residents during wildfire emergencies. The committee may enlist the assistance from the state ethnic and diversity commissions or any other organizations who have expertise in public outreach to non-English speaking people.

(2) The department of natural resources must provide to the appropriate committees of the legislature a status report of the committee's efforts by December 31, 2018, and issue a report with the committee's recommendations by November 15, 2019.

(3) In addition to the topics described in subsection (1) of this section, as part of the final report as required by subsection (2) of this section, and subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the wildland fire advisory committee must review, analyze, and make recommendations on the following issues related to the establishment of rangeland fire protection associations and other fire protection methods within our state to address unprotected and underprotected lands.

(a) The committee, with the assistance of department of natural resources' personnel, must map areas of the state east of the crest of the Cascade mountains that are not within an established fire protection district, nor subject to a planned wildland fire response.

(b) The committee, through consultation with landowners, local fire protection districts, wildfire protection agencies, and other interested parties, must identify and make recommendations as to which methods of protection may be best suited for these areas when considering values at risk, including wildlife habitat, available response resources, and geography in the area. Methods of protection may include, but are not limited to, annexation by adjacent fire protection districts, creation of new fire protection districts, and the broadening of the jurisdiction of the department of natural resources.

(c) The committee must make recommendations on the appropriate level of training and the personal protective equipment standards for rangeland fire protection associations.

(d) The committee must make an estimate of the costs to establish and maintain rangeland fire protection associations. In addition, the committee must make recommendations for appropriate fees to support the various identified methods of protection, including increasing fire protection district levies and fees collected by the department of natural resources.

(4) This section expires December 31, 2019.

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