

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1894

As Reported by House Committee On:
Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to additional temporary duties for the wildland fire advisory committee.

Brief Description: Concerning additional temporary duties for the wildland fire advisory committee.

Sponsors: Representatives Dent and Griffey.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources: 2/13/19, 2/20/19 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the scope of the report to be submitted by the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee to the Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE, & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Shewmake, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chapman, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Kretz, Lekanoff, Orcutt, Pettigrew, Ramos, Schmick, Springer and Walsh.

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

The 2018 Supplemental Operating Budget directed the Commissioner of Public Lands to direct the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee (Committee) to review, analyze, and make recommendations on certain issues with regard to wildfire prevention, response, and suppression activities in the state. A status report on the Committee's efforts was due to the Legislature by December 31, 2018, and a report with the Committee's recommendations is due by November 15, 2019.

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.

Summary of Bill:

The scope of the report prepared by the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee (Committee) pursuant to the 2018 Supplemental Operating Budget is expanded to include the following elements:

- mapping of 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;
- identification of, and recommendations on, 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;
- recommendations on the appropriate level of training and the personal protective equipment standards for Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPAs); and
- an estimate of the costs to establish and maintain RFPAs.

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.

The expansion of the scope of the report is subject to the availability of funds appropriated for the expansion.

The report must be submitted to the Legislature, along with recommendations, by November 15, 2019.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill provides an opportunity to look into Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPAs) in greater depth.

The bill represents a welcome clarification to the scope of the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee. The bill focuses on protection methods that are most appropriate for lands that are not under fire protection jurisdiction, including what levels of training are needed for RFPAs.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Dent, prime sponsor; and Loren Torgerson, Department of Natural Resources.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.