

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2166

As of February 26, 2020

Title: An act relating to creating special license plates that support working forests.

Brief Description: Creating special license plates that support working forests.

Sponsors: Representatives Orcutt, Lovick, Chapman, Barkis, Blake and Kretz.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/19/20, 95-3.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/25/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Working Forest special license plate.
- Requires the submission of 3500 signatures of people indicating a willingness to purchase the Working Forest special license plate before it can be issued.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: The Department of Licensing (DOL) issues special vehicle license plates that may be used in lieu of standard plates. A governmental or nonprofit sponsoring organization seeking to sponsor a special plate either submits an application to DOL or requests legislation to create the special plate.

Under the DOL application method, the application packet must include the design of the special license plate, proof of 3500 signatures in support of the special license plate, and a start-up fee of \$6,300. For special license plates enacted by the Legislature, a sponsoring organization must submit prepayment of all start-up costs to DOL within 30 days of enactment.

The sponsoring organization seeking to sponsor the special plate is required to reimburse DOL for the costs of establishing the new special plate. If the sponsoring organization is not able to meet the prepayment requirement, revenues generated from the sale of the special license plate are first used to pay off any costs associated with establishing the new plate.

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.

The sponsoring organization must also provide a proposed license plate design to DOL. The sponsoring organization must submit an annual financial report to DOL detailing actual revenues generated from the sale of the special license plate. The reports are reviewed, approved, and presented to the Joint Transportation Committee.

DOL collects special license plate fees, and for administrative expenses, deducts an amount not to exceed \$12 for new plate issuance and \$2 for renewal. After these expenses are paid, the state treasurer deposits the proceeds into the Motor Vehicle Account until DOL determines the start-up costs for a special license plate are paid. After that point, all remaining proceeds go to the sponsoring organization.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Striking Amendment): The Working Forest special license plate is created to support working forests. In addition to all fees and taxes required to be paid upon application for a vehicle registration, a fee of \$40 is charged for the original issuance of a Working Forest special license plate, and a \$30 fee is charged for the renewal of the plate. Revenue from the fees collected for the special license plates will provide funds to the Washington Tree Farm Program to support small forest landowners practicing sustainable forestry.

Before DOL can issue the Working Forest special license plate, the sponsoring organization must submit the signatures of 3500 people indicating a willingness to purchase the plate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on October 1, 2021.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Striking Amendment: PRO: We are coming up on the 80th anniversary of the Washington Tree Farm Program. This will support small forest owners and potentially prevent them being converted to other uses. The proceeds will allow them to continue growing timber rather than paving them over asphalt. The Tree Farm program provides support to small land owners and helps create sustainable forests, including succession planning.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Ed Orcutt, Prime Sponsor; Jason Callahan, Washington Forest Protection Association; Jenny Knoth, Washington Tree Farm Program.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.