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**Rural Development, Agriculture &  
Natural Resources Committee**

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**HB 1895**

**Brief Description:** Developing a plan for conservation, reforestation, and restoration of forests in Washington state.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Harris-Talley, Maycumber, Leavitt, Ramos, Simmons, Steele, Stonier, Peterson, Shewmake, Graham, Berg, Kloba, Callan, Riccelli, Lekanoff, Macri, Valdez and Duerr; by request of Department of Natural Resources.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to establish a voluntary, incentive-based working and nonworking forest conservation and reforestation plan that endeavors to conserve at least 1 million acres of working forestland and reforest at least 1 million acres by the year 2040.
- Requires the DNR, in order to guide prioritization of conservation and reforestation actions, to develop a prioritization framework that addresses certain elements including carbon sequestration and reforestation.
- Requires the DNR, by December 1, 2022, to submit a report to the Office of Financial Management and the appropriate committees of the Legislature that includes a map and justification of identified priority areas, determines an approach to monitoring, and describes activities to be undertaken consistent with the conservation and reforestation plan.
- Requires the DNR, by December 1, 2023, to submit to the Office of Financial Management and the appropriate committees of the Legislature a final draft of the strategic plan.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Hearing Date:** 1/18/22

**Staff:** Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

**Background:**

The Department of Natural Resources.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages a number of different categories of land on behalf of the State of Washington, each for a specific purpose and under different management requirements.

Upon statehood, the United States granted the State of Washington trust lands to support various public institutions. The DNR now manages approximately 3 million acres of federally granted trust lands that provide revenue for grade schools, state universities, buildings on the capitol campus, and correctional facilities.

The DNR also manages more than 600,000 acres of state forest lands, which were acquired primarily through tax foreclosures in the 1920s and 1930s, and to a lesser extent through purchases by the state or gifts to the state. State forest lands are managed for the benefit of the counties in which the lands are located.

Community Engagement Plans.

Pursuant to legislation enacted in 2021, the DNR and certain other state agencies must create and adopt a community engagement plan that describes planned engagement with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations for purposes of implementing the agency's environmental justice responsibilities. This plan must include, among other things, best practices for outreach and communication, the use of special screening tools, and processes that facilitate the inclusion of community members affected by agency decision-making.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) must establish a voluntary, incentive-based working and nonworking forest conservation and reforestation plan that endeavors to conserve at least 1 million acres of working forestland and reforest at least 1 million acres by the year 2040. The DNR must use the plan to assess and prioritize conservation and reforestation actions each biennium.

The plan must address the following issues:

- the prevention of actual and potential permanent loss of working and nonworking forestland across the state;
- opportunities to implement incentive-based carbon compensation programs for avoided conversion and reforestation;

- the reforestation of forestland impacted by wildfire, pests, disease, landslides, land-use change, and other stressors; and
- tree planting and increased tree canopy coverage in urban areas, prioritizing highly impacted or overburdened communities.

In order to guide prioritization of conservation and reforestation actions, the DNR must develop a prioritization framework that addresses conservation of working and nonworking forestland, carbon sequestration, reforestation, increasing urban tree canopy, and strategic plan development.

In the course of developing the prioritization framework, the DNR must take certain actions, including:

- consult with impacted communities using the community engagement plan that the DNR and other state agencies are required to develop related to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations;
- utilize the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map developed by the Department of Health to identify highly impacted or overburdened communities;
- invite input from all federally recognized tribal nations on forested areas with important cultural, ecological, and economic values that are threatened by conversion or other disturbances;
- engage impacted stakeholder groups in the development and implementation of the forest conservation and reforestation plan; and
- engage and utilize the expertise of existing relevant advisory councils and committees.

The DNR must develop voluntary tools, financing opportunities, and incentive-based activities consistent with the plan, including:

- ensuring that the plan utilizes and builds upon the evaluation of economic and other drivers of forest conversion from specified reports;
- conducting an assessment and inventory of existing voluntary tools, financing opportunities, and incentive-based activities relevant to retaining working and nonworking forestlands;
- identifying new, existing, or amended voluntary tools, financing opportunities, and incentive-based activities that would support the goals of the plan; and
- developing a pilot rapid response fund to test opportunities and barriers to acquiring, from willing sellers, private working forestlands at imminent risk of conversion.

By December 1, 2022, the DNR must submit a report to the Office of Financial Management and the appropriate committees of the Legislature that includes a map and justification of identified priority areas, determines an approach to monitoring, and describes activities to be undertaken consistent with the plan.

By December 1, 2023, the DNR must submit to the Office of Financial Management and the appropriate committees of the Legislature a final draft of the strategic plan.

Each biennium thereafter, the DNR must submit a report to the Legislature that reviews previous activities undertaken consistent with the plan and future activities to be undertaken to reach the goals. The report must include, among other elements:

- a list and summary of voluntary tools and incentives to be used in the following biennium under the plan;
- a list and summary of voluntary tools, financing opportunities, and incentives utilized under the plan in the preceding biennium;
- identification of potential partnership opportunities between the state and federally recognized tribes, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, local governments, forestland owners, conservation districts, forest collaboratives, community-based organizations, and the forest products industry;
- criteria by which a forested acre can be considered to be protected from conversion to nonforestland use;
- an update on the numbers of acres of forestland by region, both working and nonworking forestlands, including gain or loss in forested area; and
- an update on the quantity and quality of jobs created or sustained through conservation and reforestation activities.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 10, 2022.

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