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**HOUSE BILL 2243**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Reeves, Waters, Chapman, Walen, Reed, Springer, and Doglio; by request of Department of Natural Resources

AN ACT Relating to creating the children's social equity land trust; amending RCW 43.216.602 and 79.02.010; reenacting and amending RCW 79.64.110; and adding a new chapter to Title 79 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that access to affordable child care increases economic growth and labor force participation because too many working parents are forced to reduce their hours, decline promotional opportunities, or leave the workforce completely due to a lack of affordable and appropriate child care. This has, and continues to, disproportionately impact working-age mothers and contributes to the gender pay gap. The legislature recognizes that high quality, inclusive child care can reduce the opportunity gap for low-income children and black, indigenous, and children of color while consistently improving outcomes for all children both inside and outside of the classroom.

(2) The legislature acknowledges that in 2019, the Washington state child care collaborative task force found that 49 percent of parents in the state found it difficult or very difficult to find, afford, and keep child care. The lack of child care was projected to cost the state $2,080,000,000 in the direct cost of turnover and missed work due to child care issues, with a total estimate of $6,500,000,000 in direct and opportunity costs due to employee child care issues. The legislature further finds that for over the past decade, the trend has been in the wrong direction, between 2010 and 2023, the state has seen a decrease of 2,000 family child care providers and 300 centers, contributing to an increase in child care deserts statewide. Child care deserts are most often in communities that struggle with health and economic disparities. Not having access to affordable child care is a further detriment that perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequities.

(3) The legislature further finds that sustainably managed forests enhance carbon sequestration and reduce the amount of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Sustainably managed forests can also provide a stream of revenue to support new and existing child care resources in the areas of greatest need in the state.

(4) Accordingly, the legislature intends to create a permanent children's social equity land trust that will utilize the trust management expertise of the department of natural resources to deliver much needed revenue for child care programs while prioritizing funding for child care deserts to assist families with access to child care where the need is greatest.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The department is authorized to locate and acquire by gift or by purchase forested lands suitable to manage for the dual purposes of enhancing carbon sequestration and revenue production, or lands suitable for the development of alternative energies, including solar or wind. Acquisition by purchase of these lands must be at no more than fair market value. Any lands purchased pursuant to this section must be located so as to be able to be economically administered for commercial forestry, renewable energy, marketable for carbon sequestration credit sale purposes, or be viable for responsibly developed alternative energy projects. The department will consult with any impacted or interested tribal nations regarding acquisition of lands for potential alternative energy development prior to acquisition.

(2)(a) Lands acquired pursuant to this section must be held in trust for the benefit of the department of children, youth, and families, and revenue derived from these lands must be expended to provide child care grants authorized under RCW 43.216.602.

(b) In managing forestlands acquired pursuant to this section, the department is not required to maximize revenue generation and may balance revenue generation with enhancement of natural carbon sequestration afforded by sustainable management of forests.

(3) The department shall manage, care for, and protect these lands for the purposes of commercial forestry, which includes both carbon sequestration and revenue generation for child care grants to be awarded by the department of children, youth, and families under RCW 43.216.602.

(4) To the extent consistent with the requirements of this chapter, the department shall manage lands acquired pursuant to this section in compliance with policies established by the board and with the procedures that govern the department's management of other forested lands.

(5) To the extent consistent with the requirements of this chapter, the department may manage the lands acquired pursuant to this section in the same manner that it manages other state lands with regard to leasing, contracting, licensing, permitting, and granting easements and rights-of-way.

(6) With the approval of the board, the department may sell lands acquired pursuant to this section in the same manner as other state lands. Any revenue derived from any sale of lands acquired pursuant to this section shall be deposited in the child care trust account created in section 3 of this act.

(7) The department may sell valuable materials from these lands in the same manner and purposes as the department is authorized to sell valuable materials from other state lands. In addition, the department is authorized to enter into contracts for payment for ecosystem service projects on public lands acquired under this section, on terms and conditions acceptable to the department, after approval by the board.

(8) Following the deduction provided in RCW 79.64.110, revenue generated from activities on these lands, including the revenue derived from the sale of timber or other valuable materials from lands acquired pursuant to this section must be deposited in the child care trust account created in section 3 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The child care trust account is created in the state treasury. Subject to the deduction identified in RCW 79.64.110, revenue generated from activities on these lands, including revenue derived from the management of lands described in section 2 of this act, must be deposited into the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation and may be used only for the grant program authorized in RCW 43.216.602.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Revenue derived from all leases, sales, contracts, licenses, permits, easements, and rights-of-way, on lands acquired pursuant to section 2 of this act are subject to the deduction in RCW 79.64.110 to cover the costs incurred by the department in carrying out the purposes of this chapter. In the event that the department sells logs using the contract harvesting process described in RCW 79.15.500 through 79.15.530, the moneys received subject to this section are the net proceeds from the contract harvesting sale.

**Sec.**  RCW 79.64.110 and 2023 c 475 s 944 and 2023 c 383 s 8 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

(1) Any moneys derived from the lease of state forestlands or from the sale of valuable materials, oils, gases, coal, minerals, or fossils from those lands, except as provided in RCW 79.64.130, or the appraised value of these resources when transferred to a public agency under RCW 79.22.060, must be distributed as follows:

(a) For state forestlands acquired through RCW 79.22.040 or by exchange or as replacement for lands acquired through RCW 79.22.040:

(i) The expense incurred by the state for administration, reforestation, and protection, not to exceed 25 percent, which rate of percentage shall be determined by the board, must be returned to the forest development account created in RCW 79.64.100. During the 2017-2019, 2019-2021, 2021-2023, and 2023-2025 fiscal biennia, the board may increase the 25 percent limitation up to 27 percent.

(ii) Any balance remaining must be paid to the county in which the land is located or, if the land acquired under RCW 79.22.040 was exchanged, transferred, or disposed, payment must be made to the county from which the land was exchanged, transferred, or disposed. For counties participating in a land pool created under RCW 79.22.140, to each participating county proportionate to its contribution of asset value to the land pool as determined by the board. Payments made under this subsection are to be paid, distributed, and prorated to the various funds in the same manner as general taxes are paid and distributed during the year of payment. However, a county may in its discretion pay, distribute, and prorate payments made under this subsection of moneys derived from state forestlands acquired by exchange or as replacement lands, for lands acquired through RCW 79.22.040, in the same manner as general taxes are paid and distributed during the year of payment for the former state forestlands that were subject to the exchange.

(iii) Any balance remaining, paid to a county with a population of less than 16,000, must first be applied to the reduction of any indebtedness existing in the current expense fund of the county during the year of payment.

(iv) With regard to moneys remaining under this subsection (1)(a), within seven working days of receipt of these moneys, the department shall certify to the state treasurer the amounts to be distributed to the counties. The state treasurer shall distribute funds to the counties four times per month, with no more than 10 days between each payment date.

(b) For state forestlands acquired through RCW 79.22.010 or by exchange or as replacement lands for lands acquired through RCW 79.22.010, except as provided in RCW 79.64.120:

(i) Fifty percent shall be placed in the forest development account.

(ii) Fifty percent shall be prorated and distributed to the state general fund, to be dedicated for the benefit of the public schools, to the county in which the land is located or, for counties participating in a land pool created under RCW 79.22.140, to each participating county proportionate to its contribution of asset value to the land pool as determined by the board, and according to the relative proportions of tax levies of all taxing districts in the county. The portion to be distributed to the state general fund shall be based on the regular school levy rate under RCW 84.52.065 (1) and (2) and the levy rate for any school district enrichment levies. With regard to the portion to be distributed to the counties, the department shall certify to the state treasurer the amounts to be distributed within seven working days of receipt of the money. The state treasurer shall distribute funds to the counties four times per month, with no more than 10 days between each payment date. The money distributed to the county must be paid, distributed, and prorated to the various other funds in the same manner as general taxes are paid and distributed during the year of payment.

(c) For state forestlands acquired under chapter 79.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 8 of this act) or by exchange or as replacement lands for lands acquired under chapter 79.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 8 of this act):

(i) 30 percent must be placed in the forest development account created in RCW 79.64.100; and

(ii) 70 percent must be placed in the child care trust account created in section 3 of this act.

(2) A school district may transfer amounts deposited in its debt service fund pursuant to this section into its capital projects fund as authorized in RCW 28A.320.330.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.216.602 and 2021 c 199 s 314 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department shall establish a grant program to retain and expand child care in child care deserts. Grants ((~~must~~)) may be used for one-time costs associated with the opening of a child care site, including program costs, for providers who are newly licensed or are in the process of becoming licensed, or for supporting established child care sites that are in jeopardy of closure for financial reasons.

(2) ((~~The~~)) In awarding grants, the department must prioritize applications in a manner that supports racial equity across the state and must also prioritize applications that include funding for one or more of the following purposes:

(a) Personnel costs, including compensation, benefits, health care premium pay, or paid leave;

(b) Rent or mortgage payments;

(c) Copayment or tuition waivers for families receiving care, including refunds or credits to families who are not attending but are paying tuition in order to maintain a child's spot in the facility;

(d) Child care for historically disadvantaged populations;

(e) Child care during nonstandard hours and periods of the year;

(f) Outreach to families who may have stopped attending due to cost; and

(g) Mental health supports for children and employees.

(3) In addition to other indicators identified by the department, the department ((~~must~~)) may use the child care industry insights dashboard from the child care industry assessment as a tool to identify areas in which additional investments are needed in order to expand existing child care capacity to meet family demand and reduce child care deserts.

((~~(3) This section expires June 30, 2026.~~))

**Sec.**  RCW 79.02.010 and 2018 c 258 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this title unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Aquatic lands" means all state-owned tidelands, shorelands, harbor areas, and the beds of navigable waters as defined in RCW 79.105.060 that are administered by the department.

(2) "Board" means the board of natural resources.

(3) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of public lands.

(4) "Community and technical college forest reserve lands" means lands managed under RCW 79.02.420.

(5) "Community forest trust lands" means those lands acquired and managed under the provisions of chapter 79.155 RCW.

(6) "Department" means the department of natural resources.

(7)(a) "Forest biomass" means the by-products of: Current forest management activities; current forest protection treatments prescribed or permitted under chapter 76.04 RCW; or the by-products of forest health treatment prescribed or permitted under chapter 76.06 RCW.

(b) "Forest biomass" does not include wood pieces that have been treated with chemical preservatives such as: Creosote, pentachlorophenol, or copper-chrome-arsenic; wood from existing old growth forests; wood required to be left on-site under chapter 76.09 RCW, the state forest practices act; and implementing rules, and other legal and contractual requirements; or municipal solid waste.

(8) "Good neighbor agreement" means an agreement entered into between the state and the United States forest service or United States bureau of land management to conduct forestland, watershed, and rangeland restoration activities on federal lands, as originally authorized by the 2014 farm bill (P.L. 113-79).

(9) "Improvements" means anything considered a fixture in law placed upon or attached to lands administered by the department that has changed the value of the lands or any changes in the previous condition of the fixtures that changes the value of the lands.

(10) "Land bank lands" means lands acquired under RCW 79.19.020.

(11) "Person" means an individual, partnership, corporation, association, organization, cooperative, public or municipal corporation, or agency of a federal, state, or local governmental unit, however designated.

(12) "Public lands" means lands of the state of Washington administered by the department including but not limited to state lands, state forestlands, lands included in a state forestland pool, and aquatic lands.

(13) "State forestland pool" or "land pool" means state forestlands acquired and managed under RCW 79.22.140.

(14) "State forestlands" means lands acquired under RCW 79.22.010, 79.22.040, and 79.22.020.

(15) "State lands" includes:

(a) School lands, that is, lands held in trust for the support of the common schools;

(b) University lands, that is, lands held in trust for university purposes;

(c) Agricultural college lands, that is, lands held in trust for the use and support of agricultural colleges;

(d) Scientific school lands, that is, lands held in trust for the establishment and maintenance of a scientific school;

(e) Normal school lands, that is, lands held in trust for state normal schools;

(f) Capitol building lands, that is, lands held in trust for the purpose of erecting public buildings at the state capital for legislative, executive, and judicial purposes;

(g) Institutional lands, that is, lands held in trust for state charitable, educational, penal, and reformatory institutions; ((~~and~~))

(h) Land bank, escheat, donations, and all other lands, except aquatic lands, administered by the department that are not devoted to or reserved for a particular use by law; and

(i) Lands held in the child care trust established in chapter 79.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 8 of this act).

(16) "Valuable materials" means any product or material on the lands, such as forest products, forage or agricultural crops, stone, gravel, sand, peat, and all other materials of value except: (a) Mineral, coal, petroleum, and gas as provided for under chapter 79.14 RCW; and (b) forest biomass as provided for under chapter 79.150 RCW.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 4 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 79 RCW.

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