

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1529

As Passed House
March 16, 1993

Title: An act relating to the reauthorization of timber programs under chapters 314 and 315, Laws of 1991.

Brief Description: Reauthorizing certain timber programs.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Trade, Economic Development & Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Springer, Morton, Chappell, Holm, Campbell, King, Jones, Basich, Rayburn, Sheldon and Kessler; by request of Office of Financial Management.)

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Trade, Economic Development & Housing, February 15, 1993,
DPS;
Appropriations, March 6, 1993, DPS(TEH-A APP);
Passed House, March 16, 1993, 97-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Wineberry, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Forner, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Casada; Conway; Morris; Quall; Schoesler; Sheldon; Springer; Valle; and Wood.

Staff: Charles Gavigan (786-7340).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Trade, Economic Development & Housing be substituted therefor and the substitute bill as amended by Committee on Appropriations do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Locke, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Ballasiotes; Basich; Cooke; Dellwo; Dorn; Dunshee; G. Fisher; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Linville; Peery; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Sommers; Stevens; Talcott; Wang; Wineberry; and Wolfe.

Staff: Susan Nakagawa (786-7145).

Background: Economic assistance is provided to timber communities and the timber industry by coordinating state economic development services in timber communities, by providing technical and other assistance to the timber industry, by increasing financing for economic development-related public infrastructure in timber communities, and by increasing exports from timber communities.

Dislocated timber workers are provided extended unemployment insurance, training and tuition assistance, extension of the Basic Health Plan, mortgage/rental assistance, and social services in timber impacted communities.

The state efforts are coordinated by an Economic Recovery Coordination Board, an Agency Timber Task Force, and a Timber Recovery Coordinator.

Increased financing for public infrastructure in timber communities is provided through the Community Economic Revitalization Board, the Public Works Trust Fund, and the Development Loan Fund. A separate account under the Community Economic Revitalization Board finances economic development-related infrastructure in timber communities without requiring that the loan or grant be tied to a specific business. The Public Works Trust Fund can be used for new public infrastructure in timber communities. Timber communities are added as a priority for the Development Loan Fund.

The Economic Recovery Coordination Board, the Agency Timber Task Force, the Timber Recovery Coordinator, and several of the financing programs expire on June 30, 1993.

Summary of Bill: The timber programs in the Public Works Trust Fund and the Community Economic Recovery Board (CERB) are extended to June 30, 1995. Unemployment benefits for dislocated timber workers are extended to cover workers who become unemployed through July 1, 1995. The benefits can be received until the person finishes approved training plus five more weeks. An unemployed person from a plant that closes after November 1, 1992, who did not develop a required training plan due to good cause is allowed additional time to complete the plan.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 1993. However, the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Testimony For: (Trade, Economic Development & Housing) The problem is not over for timber communities. The timber team has done a good job at developing cooperative approaches to the problems facing timber communities. The program for timber workers in the community and technical colleges has been effective. The additional unemployment benefits and infrastructure financing assistance are critical to help dislocated timber workers and communities in the next two years.

(Appropriations) Job retraining programs often take 18 to 24 months. Extension of the program is necessary to allow displaced workers an opportunity to complete retraining programs. The social services provided through the timber bills need to be continued. This bill is part of a larger coastal economic recovery plan that provides transition opportunities. The bill helps move the state toward a more sustainable economy on the coast.

Testimony Against: (Trade, Economic Development & Housing) None.

(Appropriations) None.

Witnesses: (Trade, Economic Development & Housing) (All support the bill) Representative Bob Basich, sponsor; Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Harriette Buckmann, Clallam County/Timber Counties; Steve Lansing, Lutheran Public Policy Office; Judy Turpin, Washington Environmental Council; Pat Sweeney, Economic Recovery Coordinating Board; and Meg Van Schoorl, Department of Community Development.

(Appropriations) (All support the substitute bill): Representative Jim Springer, prime sponsor; Representative Bob Basich, sponsor; Jeff Parsons, National Audubon Society; Steve Lansing, Lutheran Public Policy Office; and Henry F. Smith, Grays Harbor Community College, Dislocated Workers Organization.