

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2286

As Reported By House Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks

Title: An act relating to rewards for information regarding public lands and natural resource violations.

Brief Description: Increasing the reward for information regarding certain violations.

Sponsors: Representatives Pruitt, Wolfe, Dunshee, Valle and L. Johnson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks, January 25, 1994, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Pruitt, Chair; R. Johnson, Vice Chair; McMorris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dunshee; Linville; Schoesler; Sheldon; B. Thomas; Valle; and Wolfe.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: The Department of Natural Resources has the authority to offer rewards for information on violations of laws or rules pertaining to the state's public lands and natural resources. The maximum reward is \$1,000. The department may adopt rules to determine the source of funds to pay for such rewards. No appropriation is required for the disbursement of the funds.

The department reports an increase in the incidence of abuse and damage to public lands over the last several years. Incidents include illegal dumping, vandalism to facilities and destruction of standing timber.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The amount of the reward that the Department of Natural Resources may offer is increased from \$1,000 to \$10,000. The reward program does not apply to violations of the forest practices laws or rules. The department is authorized to adopt rules establishing criteria for paying a reward and the amount to be paid.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill clarifies that the provisions of the reward program apply to natural resources on state lands and makes a technical change.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The department has seen a rapid escalation in damages and abuse on the lands it manages. Examples include vandalism, garbage dumping and destruction of timber. The department needs every tool it can get to deal with these growing problems. The department is interested in information regarding violations on lands the department manages, so reports on forest practices violations on other lands are excluded from this program. Private forest landowners appreciate the problems the Department of Natural Resources is experiencing and support the department's ability to offer rewards more commensurate with the damages imposed. Private forest landowners have had some success with reward programs.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Stan Biles, Department of Natural Resources; and Tim Boyd, Washington Forest Protection Association.