

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6037

As Passed House - Amended
March 1, 1994

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: Senators Owen and Oke.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks, February 18, 1994, DPA.
Passed House - Amended, March 1, 1994, 93-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Pruitt, Chair; Stevens, 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 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.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The problems of vandalism and damage to public lands described to the committee earlier persist. Since there has been some press publicity about the legislative proposals, people are beginning to call the regional offices asking about the program. There does seem to be increased interest in reporting incidents due to the added monetary incentive. Interested groups will watch closely as the department adopts rules to implement this program.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Mimi Welch, Department of Natural Resources (pro); and Kent Lebsack, Washington Cattlemens Association.