

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5308

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, MARCH 3, 1993

Brief Description: Modifying the forest fire protection assessment.

SPONSORS: Senator Owen

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5308 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Owen, Chairman; Hargrove, Vice Chairman; Franklin, Haugen, Oke, Snyder, and Spanel.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Hearing Dates: January 13, 1993; February 1, 1993

COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5308 as recommended by Committee on Natural Resources be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Spanel, Vice Chairman; Cantu, Gaspard, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Jesernig, Pelz, Quigley, Snyder, Talmadge, West, and Wojahn.

Staff: Michael Groesch (786-7715)

Hearing Dates: February 24, 1993; March 3, 1993

BACKGROUND:

The present statewide assessment for forest fire protection is 22 cents per acre for parcels greater than two acres with a minimum assessment of \$14 per year. Parcels two acres or less are not assessed, although forest fire protection is required for these forest lands. If the minimum assessment of \$14 per year were applied to parcels two acres or less, an additional \$6 million a year could be added to the forest fire suppression account following a one to two year start-up process carried out by the county assessors and the Department of Natural Resources.

SUMMARY:

The minimum assessment of \$14 per year is extended to the two acre and less parcels of forest land in both eastern and western Washington.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

Language is added to clarify that the assessment is for a yearly period. A 50 cents fee is added to go to the county assessors to assist in collection and administration costs.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: requested

TESTIMONY FOR (Natural Resources):

Owners of small parcels should pay because they are being protected by the Department of Natural Resources.

TESTIMONY AGAINST (Natural Resources): None

TESTIFIED (Natural Resources): PRO: Craig Voegele, Boise Cascade; Tim Boyd, Washington Forest Protection Association; Nels Hanson, Washington Farm Forestry Association; Ken Hoover, Dept. of Natural Resources

TESTIMONY FOR (Ways & Means):

Small parcels create a disproportionate amount of costs in fighting fires. The Department of Natural Resources is spending an increasing amount of the fire protection budget to protect homes in forested areas.

TESTIMONY AGAINST (Ways & Means): None

TESTIFIED (Ways & Means): Art Steins, Dept. of Natural Resources