

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**ESB 6037**

**AS PASSED SENATE, JANUARY 28, 1994**

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

**SPONSORS:** Senators Owen and Oke

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Owen, Chairman; Hargrove, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Erwin, Franklin, Haugen, Oke, Sellar, L. Smith, Snyder and Spanel.

**Staff:** Vic Moon (786-7469)

**Hearing Dates:** January 14, 1994

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS**

**BACKGROUND:**

RCW 79.01.765 authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to offer rewards not to exceed \$1,000 for information regarding violations of any statute or rule relating to the state's public lands or natural resources. Fines for violations of the Forest Practices Act (RCW 76.09) are presently in law.

The number of public use abuse incidents on state land is increasing. Raising the reward limit from \$1,000 to \$10,000 is viewed as an incentive for the public to report incidents which could be a deterrent to preventing theft and abuse.

In 1989, an inventory identified 1,683 dumpsites on state land and a 1992 inventory of high-priority sites for clean up identified 113 sites with an estimated clean-up cost of \$207,000. Illegal dumping continues to increase on state lands and at the present time, as many as 2,355 illegal dumps exist on state lands with a potential cost of \$855,000. Substantial damage to standing timber is affecting the income from the state's trust lands.

**SUMMARY:**

The Department of Natural Resources is authorized to offer and pay a reward up to \$10,000 for information regarding violations of any statute or rule relating to the state's public lands and the state's natural resources. The rules, regulations and statute authorizing forest practices in Title 76.09 is excluded from the reward system.

The department is authorized to adopt rules to establish criteria for paying for the award and for the amount of such awards.

The department is authorized to determine the appropriate account or fund from which to pay the reward. No appropriations are required to make the reward.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

A reward system will help in identifying people who damage resources. Such a reward has worked well in other areas and the state is facing damage exceeding \$200,000 a year to land and resources. Part of the costs would come from fines for violations and money recovered through the courts.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Jennifer Belcher, Commissioner of Public Lands (pro);  
Tim Boyd, Washington Forest Protection Association (pro)

**HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):**

The meanings of "statute" and "rule" are clarified.