

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1287

C 143 L 95

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Authorizing silvicultural burning to correct a forest health problem under certain circumstances.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives McMorris, Horn, Chandler, Regala, Mastin, Clements, Koster, Robertson, Johnson, Boldt, Chappell, Schoesler and Rust).

House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Ecology & Parks

Background: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers the state's silvicultural burning permit program. The issuance and use of such permits must comply with air quality standards established by the Department of Ecology. State law directs the DNR to set smoke dispersal objectives for the silvicultural burning program that are consistent with the air quality standards.

The DNR also administers a program for reducing state-wide emissions from silvicultural forest burning. The program was given emission-reduction targets by statute. Using the average annual emissions level from 1985 to 1989 as the baseline, emissions were to be reduced by 20 percent by December 31, 1994. By December 31, 2000, emissions must be reduced to 50 percent of the baseline. The DNR indicates that particulate emissions in 1993 were below the December 2000 level.

Summary: Under certain conditions, emissions from silvicultural burning in eastern Washington conducted to restore forest health or to prevent additional deterioration of forest health are exempted from the targets and calculations made under the DNR's emission reduction program for silvicultural forest burning. The emissions are exempted if:

- (1) The landowner submits a written request to the department including a brief description of alternatives to silvicultural burning and reasons why the landowner believes the alternatives are not appropriate.
- (2) The department determines that the proposed burning operation: is being conducted to restore forest health or to prevent additional deterioration to forest health; meets the requirements of the state smoke management plan to protect public health, visibility, and the environment; and will not be conducted during an

air pollution episode or during periods of impaired air quality in the vicinity of the proposed burn.

(3) The landowner is encouraged to notify the public in the vicinity of the burn the general location and approximate time of ignition.

The Department of Ecology is authorized to conduct a limited, seasonal ambient air quality monitoring program to measure the effects of such burnings.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 98 0

Senate 41 0

Effective: July 23, 1995