

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HCR 4410

As Reported By House Committee On:

Commerce & Labor

Brief Description: Establishing a joint select committee on consulting foresters.

Sponsors: Representative McMorris.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 3/5/97 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives McMorris, Chairman; Honeyford, Vice Chairman; Conway, Ranking Minority Member; Wood, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boldt; Clements; Cole and Lisk.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Hatfield.

Staff: Selwyn Walters (786-7117).

Background: Washington law does not regulate the practice of consulting foresters. The state's Forest Practices Act governs the management of the state's forest land resources. The act refers to a 'professional forester;' however, that term is not defined.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature declares that there are no means of providing reliable information to private landowners about the training and expertise of persons representing themselves as consulting foresters, and that individuals without adequate training and experience can cause significant damage to the state's forests by recommending unproven or unsound forest management practices. A joint select committee on consulting foresters is established to conduct an interim review to decide appropriate licensing methods for consulting foresters.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Individuals providing advice on forest practices and management are not educated or skilled. Licensing would insure minimum education and ethical standards for persons offering advice on the management of forest lands. The ethics requirements for licensing would insure that forest landowners are treated fairly. It does not make sense for the state to require licensing individuals who apply herbicides for brush and weed control on forested property, but not require licensing for a consulting forester who makes recommendations for a timber management plan and who may actually design and supervise that plan. Concern for the state's forests requires nothing less than the most ethical and professional advice and supervision.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Maurice Williamson.