

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5119

As Passed House-Amended:

April 14, 1997

Title: An act relating to compensating members of the forest practices appeals board.

Brief Description: Compensating members of the forest practices appeals board.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Swecker, Snyder and Roach).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 3/21/97, 4/3/97 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House-Amended: 4/14/97, 97-1.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Buck, Chairman; Sump, Vice Chairman; Thompson, Vice Chairman; Regala, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander; Anderson; Chandler; Hatfield and Sheldon.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Pennington.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: A person serving on a board or commission may receive compensation for that service. The level of compensation is based on the responsibilities of the board or commission and the time required to perform the statutory duties of the board or commission.

A Class 3 group is any part-time statutory board, commission, council, committee, or other similar group which has rule-making authority, performs quasi-judicial functions, has responsibility for the administration or policy direction of a state agency or program, or performs regulatory or licensing functions with respect to a specific profession, occupation, business, or industry. A person serving on a Class 3 group is eligible to receive no more than \$50 for each day during which that person attends an official meeting of the group or performs statutorily prescribed duties approved by the chair of the group.

A Class 4 group is a part-time statutory board, commission, council, committee, or other similar group that (1) has rule-making authority, performs quasi-judicial functions, or has responsibility for the administration or policy direction of a state agency or program, (2) has duties deemed by the Legislature to be of overriding sensitivity and importance to the public welfare and the operation of state government, and (3) requires service from its members representing a significant demand on their time that is normally in excess of 100 hours of meeting time per year. A person serving on a Class 4 group is eligible to receive no more than \$100 for each day during which that person attends an official meeting of the group or performs statutorily prescribed duties approved by the chair of the group.

The Forest Practices Appeals Board is a three-member board that hears appeals related to forest practices such as the approval or disapproval of a forest practices permit. At least one member must be a practicing attorney. Board members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate and serve six-year terms. Board members are compensated as a Class 3 group. Compensation may not exceed \$10,000 in a fiscal year.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature finds that the functions of the Forest Practices Appeals Board have overriding sensitivity and are of importance to the public welfare and operation of state government. Compensation for board members is increased by categorizing the appeals board as a Class 4 group rather than as a Class 3 group. The director of the Environmental Hearings Office will make the determination as to what statutorily prescribed duties merit compensation in addition to attendance at board meetings and hearings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1997.

Testimony For: The workload for this board has gone up consistently, and the bill reflects that workload increase. Serving on this board now requires a substantial commitment. It is only fair to increase the compensation.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Dan Swecker, prime sponsor; and William Harrison, Environmental Hearings Office (both in favor).