

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HCR 4408

As Reported By House Committee On:
Natural Resources

Brief Description: Creating the joint select committee on management of state forest lands.

Sponsors: Representatives Thompson, Buck, Sheldon, Sump, Alexander and DeBolt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 3/4/97, 3/5/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Buck, Chairman; Sump, Vice Chairman; Thompson, Vice Chairman; Alexander; Chandler; Hatfield; Pennington and Sheldon.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Regala, Ranking Minority Member; and Anderson.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: The Legislature is the trustee of the state's forest trust lands, and the Legislature has assigned the duties of management of these lands to the Department of Natural Resources. As trustee, the Legislature is concerned about the returns provided to the trust beneficiaries from the management of these lands.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Joint Select Committee on the Management of State Forest Lands is created. The committee will compare the management approach currently used on state forest lands with management practices used on privately owned commercial timber lands. The committee will compare the costs and returns associated with management practices in a number of specified categories, and the committee will analyze the effect of federal policy on log exports from public lands on returns generated from state forest lands. The Department of Natural Resources will provide information necessary to the committee for its study. The committee will report to the Legislature by December 1, 1997.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute resolution expands the size of the committee from six members to eight members, two from each caucus in the House and Senate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: It is the Legislature's fiduciary duty to consider this issue. We need to verify whether there are differences in management approaches and associated returns and see how things can be improved if there are differences.

Testimony Against: It would be good to reflect on the amount of agency staff time this study would require. A good first step might be to evaluate the large body of work already completed on this subject.

Testified: Representative Bill Thompson, prime sponsor (in favor); Kaleen Cottingham, Department of Natural Resources (opposed).