

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5119

As Passed Senate, March 6, 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 & Parks: 1/30/97, 2/7/97 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 3/6/97, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5119 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Jacobsen, Morton, Prentice, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Part-time Forest Practices Appeals Board members are classified as a class 3 group and are eligible to receive compensation not exceeding \$50 for each day during which they attend meetings of the group or perform statutorily prescribed duties approved by the chairperson. No compensation is allowed if the member is otherwise a full-time employee of any other governmental unit and receives compensation for that day. Compensation is only authorized if specifically authorized under the law dealing with the particular subgroup.

Current law gives the chairperson of the group power to determine what statutorily prescribed duties are compensable.

Presently, the board conducts an average of 48 full-day hearings per year. Class 4 classification would require a finding by the Legislature that the board's functions have overriding sensitivity and importance to the public welfare and operation of state government.

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.

Part-time Forest Practices Appeals Board members are classified as a class 4 group compensated at an amount not to exceed \$100 per day.

The director of the Environmental Hearings Office must determine what statutorily prescribed duties, in addition to attendance at a hearing or meeting of the board, merit compensation.

Appropriation: \$8,000, or as much thereof as necessary, for the biennium ending June 30, 1999 from the general fund to the Environmental Hearings Office.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 1997.

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

Testimony For: Board members are not compensated for travel time, just mileage. Members come from a variety of geographical locations and meet at a variety of locations. One member must be a practicing attorney and foregoes significant income to be a board member. There is really no need for a practicing attorney on the board.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Robert Quodbach, Forest Practices Appeals Board Member (pro).

House Amendment(s): The \$8,000 general fund appropriation for the biennium ending June 30, 1999, to the Environmental Hearings Office is eliminated.