

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5619

As Passed Senate, March 16, 1999

Title: An act relating to forest fire protection assessment.

Brief Description: Modifying the forest fire protection assessment process.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senator Jacobsen; by request of Office of Financial Management).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 2/8/99, 3/1/99 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 3/16/99, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5619 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Morton, Oke, Rossi, Snyder, Spanel and Stevens.

Staff: Victor Moon (786-7469)

Background: The Department of Natural Resources provides fire protection on private lands, which is funded partially by an assessment on private landowners and partially by the general fund. Fire protection includes both preventive measures and the actual fighting of fires when they occur. Forest landowners of small parcels can get a refund for fire assessments on more than one parcel in each county where they own land.

Summary of Bill: Forest landowners of small parcels must apply to the county only once to receive a fire assessment refund for excess payments. The landowner must notify the county of any change in ownership.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Assessments need to be increased to fund the 1999-2001 budget request.

Testimony Against: The entire program needs to be adjusted in the light of the major forest fire funding study done two years ago.

Testified: PRO: Marsh Taylor, OFM. CON: Tim Boyd, WFPA, Dave Crooker, Plum Creek Timber; Kevin Godbent, Weyerhaeuser; Bill Howard, Boise Cascade; Nels Hanson, Washington Farm Forestry Association; John Hassell, Simpson Timber.

House Amendment(s): Owners of small parcels of forest lands may submit an application listing the parcels owned to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the computation of forest fire protection assessments. The property owner may submit only one application per county. DNR must compute the assessment and allocate one parcel for collecting the assessment. The county bills the assessment to this one identified parcel. The property owner is required to notify DNR of any changes in ownership of the parcels.

Property owners with the following number of parcels may apply to DNR in the year indicated:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER OF PARCELS</u>
2000	10 or more parcels
2001	8 or more parcels
2002	6 or more parcels
2003	4 or more parcels
2004 and thereafter	2 or more parcels