

1281-S

Sponsor(s): House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Regala, Anderson, Doumit, Haigh, Rockefeller, Eickmeyer, Hatfield, O'Brien, Kessler, Kenney and Lantz; by request of Commissioner of Public Lands)

Brief Title: Creating the family forestry support act.

HB 1281-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Declares that a landowner landscape plan will help each nonindustrial private forest landowner incorporate best available science into his or her long-term forest management objectives. This planning system is intended to be a voluntary approach to providing protection for public resources and capital improvements of the state, while providing landowners longer term certainty for timber harvest.

Grants DNR authority to select up to twenty nonindustrial landowners for the purpose of a pilot project to develop individual landscape management plans.

(1) Pilot project participants must be selected by the department in consultation with the departments of fish and wildlife and ecology by December 31, 1999.

(2) Pilot project participants shall be selected on the basis of size (less than fifteen thousand acres total ownership), risk to the habitat and species, variety and importance of species and habitats in the planning area, geographic distribution, surrounding ownership, other ongoing landscape and watershed planning activities in the area, potential benefits to water quantity and quality, financial and staffing capabilities of participants, and other factors that will contribute to the creation of a nonindustrial forest landowner multispecies landscape planning system.

Provides that, after a nonindustrial forest landowner landscape plan is adopted: (1) The department shall issue a single forest practices permit valid for the term of the plan and the landowner landscape plan shall supersede any current or future rule that specifically covers the specific elements of the environment being protected under the plan. This permit shall not impose additional conditions beyond those agreed to in the plan;

(2) the plan shall serve as the hydraulic project approval for the life of the plan, in compliance with RCW 75.20.100; and

(3) nothing in this section impairs the department's conditioning and enforcement authority.

Requires landowners receiving a landscape level permit to meet annually with the department and the departments of fish and wildlife and ecology to review the specific forest practices activities planned for the next twelve months and to determine whether these activities are in compliance with the plan. The departments will consult with the affected Indian tribes and other interested parties who have expressed an interest in a particular landscape plan.

Directs the department to provide to the forest practices board, no later than December 31, 2002, and every two years thereafter, an evaluation of the pilot projects created in this act. The department shall recommend to the forest practices board whether a permanent landscape planning process should be established along with a discussion of what legislative and rule modifications are necessary.

Finds that additional resources are needed by the department of natural resources to provide an enhanced level of stewardship technical assistance to nonindustrial forest landowners. The enhanced stewardship program will allow the department to expand the current program to cover more nonindustrial forest lands and in additional counties. Funding will cover the development of stewardship plans, planting of trees and shrubs, forest stand improvement, riparian and wetland establishment or enhancement, and prevention and control of sedimentation.

Provides that the department of natural resources, in coordination with the department of community, trade, and economic development, shall develop and implement a rural design demonstration. The rural design demonstration will include defining design principles, assessing compatibility with existing county plans, and developing rural design standards for rural land. It shall be developed in such a way that it can be used as a model for conserving natural resources and preserving rural landscapes while maintaining existing development densities.

Declares that the purchase of conservation easements, also known as "conservation futures," provides the strongest possible incentive to nonindustrial, private forest landowners to prevent the conversion of their forest land to a use incompatible with forestry.

Makes appropriations to carry out the purposes of the act.

Provides that the act shall be null and void if appropriations are not approved.