

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSJM 8002

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Brief Description: Requesting forest health-related management activities on all state and national forests in Washington state.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water (originally sponsored by Senators Morton, Hewitt, Sheahan, Stevens, Parlette, Mulliken, Oke and Roach).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/26/03, 4/4/03 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Requests the federal government to take certain forest health measures.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Holmquist, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kristiansen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Eickmeyer, Grant, McDermott, Orcutt, Quall and Sump.

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

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The nation's federal forests are managed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), through the Forest Service. Nationally, the Forest Service manages approximately 192 million acres. In Washington, the Forest Service manages six national forests. These forests are the Colville Forest, the Gifford Pinchot Forest, the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie Forest, the Okanogan Forest, the Olympic Forest, and the Wenatchee Forest. The total upland acreage managed by the Forest Service in Washington is reported by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to be over nine million

acres.

The USDA is not the only agency that manages federally-owned land. The Department of the Interior oversees five land management agencies that manage over 507 million acres nationwide. The land management agencies housed within the Department of the Interior include the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Reclamation.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The President of the United States, the Speaker of the U.S. House, the President of the U.S. Senate, the members of the U.S. Congress, the Secretary of the USDA, the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, and the Secretary of the Department of the Interior are all asked to take certain forest health measures to help address the issues facing the forests in Washington.

The requests include:

- Initiating appropriate forest health-related management activities;
- Having the Forest Service review the effectiveness of current fire fighting procedures;
- Supporting federal forest management activities to reduce the spread of insects and disease to state and private forest lands;
- Asking Congress to authorize the use of revenue generated from harvest activities to fund ecosystem restoration and reforestation activities;
- Encouraging the Forest Service to consider timber market conditions when laying out timber sales;
- Encouraging the Forest Service to use innovating and efficient logging techniques that ensure environmental protection;
- Asking federal, state, and local governments to streamline the process of addressing forest health;
- Encouraging the federal and state governments to work with stakeholders to promote efforts that provide policy solutions; and
- Asking Congress to provide adequate funding for the Forest Service.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The amendment rewords certain provisions of the Joint Memorial, removing references to aggressive forest management, overstocked stands, and delays and encumbrances directed at delaying efforts of the Forest Service.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Testimony For: This Joint Memorial encourages the U.S. Forest Service to be a better steward of the land they own. In the past the timber industry has assembled a panel to look into forest health issues, and the federal role was identified as significant.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Bill Garvin, Washington Forest Protection Association.