
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2733

Brief Description: Providing for certification of certain state forest lands.

Sponsors: Representatives Cooper, Hunt, Nixon, McDermott, Jarrett, Wallace, Romero, McCoy, Simpson, G., Clibborn, Dickerson, Upthegrove, Rockefeller, Dunshee, Miloscia, O'Brien, Murray, Quall, Ruderman, Sullivan, Moeller, Chase and Kagi.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Natural Resources to obtain a third-party sustainability certification for the state-owned forests that it manages.

Hearing Date: 1/30/04

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

Forest certification is a process in which a forest landowner undergoes an audit of the forest practices utilized on his or her land by a third party organization. If the forest practices of the landowner are modified to satisfy the standards for long-term sustainability identified by the third party organization, then that organization will "certify" that any wood products originating from that land holding were grown in a way that will provide long-term sustainability for the forest resource.

Currently, state-owned forest lands are not certified by any of the known third-party organizations. Certain lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have previously been audited by the third-party organization known as the Forest Stewardship Council; however, the required identified management changes were not instituted, and certification has not been granted.

Summary of Bill:

The DNR must obtain a certified status of the forest management and silviculture practiced on the state-owned forest lands that it manages. State forests located west of the crest of the Cascade Mountains must be certified by December 31, 2005. By that same date, the DNR must have state forests east of the crest of the Cascades audited by a third-party certification organization, with certification coming one year later.

The third-party certification organization chosen by the DNR must satisfy a number of criteria. The criteria that must be satisfied by the certifying organization include:

- Developing standards independently from the forest products industry;
- Measuring on-the-ground performance against predefined standards related to long-term economic viability, ecologically sound forest practices, and the maximization of social benefits;
- Requiring independent peer review of certification reports and decisions;
- Tracking products removed from a forest through production to the point of sale;
- Being applicable worldwide;
- Requiring accredited forest auditors to consult with the scientific community during the certification process;
- Requiring landowners to reinvest in local communities, to protect old growth stands, to reduce the use of the most toxic chemicals, and to protect working forests from development pressures; and
- Recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/20/04.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.