

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2753

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Energy & Water, February 26, 2004

Title: An act relating to the management of state-owned forest land.

Brief Description: Studying sustainable forestry certification.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Linville and Rockefeller).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Energy & Water: 2/25/04, 2/26/04 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & WATER

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Morton, Chair; Hewitt, Vice Chair; Doumit, Hale, Hargrove, Honeyford and Oke.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

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 third-party organization. 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 Amended Bill: DNR must prepare a report for the Legislature and the Board of Natural Resources by no later than January 1, 2005, that studies up to two sustainable forestry certification options that are available to the state. This includes the identification of:

- Changes to current forest management practices that are needed to attain certification;
- Added costs incurred due to management changes;
- The short-term and long-term costs and benefits to the trusts;
- If the preferred sustainable harvest calculation satisfies the requirements of the state's habitat conservation plans; and

- How the preferred sustainable harvest calculation increases or decreases the cost of compliance with certification standards.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The sustainable yield calculations will go on as required by current law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The department and the Legislature need more information to make decisions on the sustained yield calculation for state forest lands.

Testimony Against: A study of forest certification is fine but it should not hold up the Board of Natural Resources setting of the ten-year sustainable harvest level.

Testified: Douglas T. Grover, Lumbermans (pro); Paul Parker, Timber Counties (con); Dan Cothren, Wahkiakum County Commissioner (con); Bruce Mackey, DNR (con); Gary McCausland, Installation Forester, Ft. Lewis (pro); Clifford Traisman, WA Conservation Voters, WA Enviro Council (pro); Mike Ryherd, NW Ecosystem Alliance (pro); Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy (pro); Bill Garvin, WFPA (con); Bill Stauffacher, American Forest and Paper Assn. (pro).