

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSJM 8002

As Passed Legislature

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).

Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water
House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

Background: Numerous studies have found that many American forests are under stress. The problem includes forest weeds, tree disease, overly dense forest areas and species growing in areas where they have not traditionally grown. The resulting problems from forest diseases include risk of wildfire and loss of habitat for wildlife. Continuing threats from the introduction and spread of non-native pests and plants, extreme weather events and climatic flux, and changes in forest conditions due to both man and nature are placing American forests at risk. This includes both those forests that are managed for timber production and those that are managed for multiple uses and for wilderness preservation.

Summary: Recognizing the risks of fire and the problems of forest health, the Legislature requests that health-related management activities on all forest lands be accelerated in order to reduce the effects of catastrophic wildfire and loss of wildlife and recreation opportunities. The Forest Service is asked to review the effectiveness of its current firefighting procedures and to ensure that the most effective firefighting methods are used. The memorial supports the federal management activities to reduce the risk of the further spread of insects and diseases to state forest lands and to private lands adjacent to federal lands.

The Forest Service is encouraged to focus on management activities on federal lands adjacent to private lands and then to request from Congress the authority to use revenue generated from harvest activities to fund ecosystem restoration and reforestation. The Forest Service is encouraged to consider current market conditions and the economic viability of timber sales when choosing harvest methods and to encourage innovative and efficient logging techniques to ensure adequate protection of fish, wildlife and water quality. Federal, state and local agencies are asked to work together to streamline the process to jointly address forest health issues. Congress is asked to provide adequate funding for the United States Forest Service and continually assess the Forest Service's progress towards a healthy forest environment.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	0	
House	97	0	(House amended)
Senate	47	0	(Senate concurred)

