

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5405

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 28, 2005
Ways & Means, March 7, 2005

Title: An act relating to establishing the future of Washington forests review council.

Brief Description: Establishing the future of Washington forests review council.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Swecker, Doumit, Hargrove, Spanel and Morton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/16/05, 2/28/05 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 3/7/05 [DP2S].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5405 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Oke, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Morton, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5405 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Fairley, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Brian Sims (786-7431)

Background: The Legislature has declared that forest land resources are among the most valuable of all the resources in the state and that a viable forest products industry is of prime importance to the state's economy. Forestry and forest lands in Washington face significant challenges, however. The state's population has increased from approximately 4.8 million in 1990 to almost 5.9 million in 2000. During that period, employment in the natural resources industry fell from .58 percent to .35 percent of Washington's total jobs. Additionally, timber harvests in the state fell from 5,849 to 4,177 million board feet between 1990 and 2000.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: The Future of Washington Forests Review Council (council) is established. The purpose of the council is to: (1) gather information necessary to understand the contributions of the forest products' industry and secondary manufacturing sectors to the state; and (2) develop recommendations for policy changes that will help

maintain the stability and growth of the forest products' industry in the state. This council is composed of the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Commissioner of Public Lands.

The council is directed, subject to the necessary appropriations, to commission four studies. These studies include: (1) an update of the 1992 timber supply study conducted by the University of Washington; (2) an independent assessment of the economic contribution of the forest products' industry and secondary manufacturing sectors to the state; (3) a comparison of the competitive position of the state's forest products industry globally and with other leading forest products' states; and (4) an assessment of the dynamics that development plays in the conversion of forests to nonforestry uses. The council may form technical advisory committees to assist the council accomplish its tasks. The Governor's Office, the Office of Financial Management, and the Department of Natural Resources will provide staff to the council.

Based on its review, the council will summarize the current and potential role of nonfederal forests in Washington over the next 50 years. The council must also recommend policy changes that would enhance the competitive position of the state's forest products' industry, ensure a productive forest land base for the future, and enhance the recreational opportunities on working forests in the state.

The council will also analyze and recommend policies and programs to assist landowners in the Cascade foothills area continue to use their land for traditional forestry while at the same time accommodating new land uses. The Cascade foothills area is composed of nonurbanized lands within the Cascade mountain range and drainages lying between 300 and 3,000 feet above sea level within Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King, Pierce, Thurston, and Lewis counties.

The council must report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 31, 2007. The powers and duties of the council terminate June 30, 2008.

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The second substitute bill revises the requirements of the update to the 1992 timber supply study to reduce the fiscal impact, and eliminates the appropriations.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill directs the council to assess the dynamics that development plays in the conversion of forests to nonforestry uses. The substitute bill adds the section regarding Cascade foothills area landowners. Also, the substitute bill sets a date by which the council must report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature and a date by which the powers and duties of the council terminate.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

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

Testimony For: Before substantive programs to assist the forest products industry are enacted, a study of the role of the industry and methods to strengthen it should be conducted. Aid to the industry is necessary, but first the most effective steps for providing aid should be discussed. Although this study is necessary, the language of the bill is vague as to the duration of the council.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Bill Garvin, Washington Forest Protection Association. OTHER: Pat McElroy, Department of Natural Resources; Miguel Perez-Gibson, Cascade Land Conservancy.