
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1600

Brief Description: Protecting ancestral trees.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunt, B. Sullivan, McCoy, Williams, Appleton, Chase, Hasegawa, Dickerson, Wood, Simpson and Pedersen.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits the Department of Natural Resources from offering for sale any ancestral trees located on public lands west of the crest of the Cascade Mountains unless the harvest operation is specifically authorized by the Board of Natural Resources.

Hearing Date: 2/13/07

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The state is the trustee of nearly 3 million acres of upland properties. Roughly two-thirds of these properties are forested, with the majority of the other parcels managed for agriculture or commercial development. The Legislature has vested specific authority for the Department of Natural Resources (Department) to sell timber and other valuable resources from these state lands. The Department sells a variety of resources from state lands, including timber, stone, gravel, and geoducks. The Department sells timber from state forest lands by putting tracts of timber up for bid. The Department establishes an appraised value for the timber, and this value becomes the minimum bid for the timber sale. The successful bidder who is awarded the contract generally has three years to harvest the timber from the sale.

Summary of Bill:

The Department is prohibited from offering for sale any ancestral trees located on public lands west of the crest of the Cascade Mountains unless the harvest operation is specifically authorized by the Board of Natural Resources (Board). The term "ancestral trees" is defined to mean a

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contiguous stand of trees of similar characteristics that is five acres in size or larger, is in the most structurally complex stage of stand development, and has a natural origin date prior to the year 1850.

The Board may only authorize the harvest of ancestral trees after making a formal finding that the harvest is necessary for the preservation of the health and safety of other ancestral trees, public safety, or overall forest health. The Board may also authorize the harvest of ancestral trees to meet the demands of other special circumstances.

Ancestral trees may also be harvested within the borders of the Olympic Experimental State Forest if the harvest is consistent with the research objectives of the Olympic Experimental State Forest.

The Board is directed to prioritize lands containing ancestral trees for transfer out of trust status and into an ownership compatible with permanent protection of the trees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 6, 2007.

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