
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2468

Brief Description: Authorizing the department of natural resources to establish an inventory, conduct an assessment, and develop recommendations to improve community and urban forest conditions in Washington state.

Sponsors: Representatives VanDeWege, Warnick, Blake, Dickerson, Linville, Upthegrove, McCoy and Hinkle; by request of Department of Natural Resources.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the authority for the Department of Natural Resources to conduct a community and urban forestry program from discretionary to mandatory.
- Requires the Department of Natural Resources to develop and conduct inventories and assessments of community and urban forests.

Hearing Date: 1/16/2008

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is authorized to establish a community and urban forestry program [RCW 76.15.020]. Community and urban forests are identified as land within human settlements that does, or could, support trees [RCW 76.15.010]. The program authorized at the DNR may include assistance to local governments to encourage proper tree maintenance, policy and program coordination assistance, and the provision of surplus equipment to local governments to aid urban forestry programs [RCW 76.15.020].

The DNR is also authorized to enter into agreements with non-profit tree-planting organizations and other entities with interests related to urban forestry [RCW 76.15.030 & 050]. Funding can be received by the DNR from the federal government or by gifts and grants. The DNR may also charge fees for workshops and material distribution to raise funds. Once received, the DNR

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utilizes the funding for the purposes of forwarding urban and community forestry in the state [RCW 76.15.030].

Summary of Bill:

The authority for the DNR to conduct a community and urban forestry program is changed from discretionary to mandatory, and definitions are provided for the terms "community and urban forest assessment" and "community and urban forest inventory".

In addition to requiring the current program to continue, the DNR is also directed to conduct a statewide inventory of community and urban forests, conduct an urban forest assessment, and develop an implementation plan for the inventory and assessment of community and urban forests.

The uniform criteria for the inventory and assessment must be developed by the DNR with the advice of an advisory committee composed of various professionals with expertise related to urban forestry. Members of the advisory committee must be appointed by the Commissioner of Public Lands and are eligible for travel reimbursement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available..

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