

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1124

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Ways & Means, April 2, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to the inclusion of the department of natural resources' law enforcement officers in the Washington public safety employees' retirement system by adding the department of natural resources to the definition of "employer" under chapter 41.37 RCW.

**Brief Description:** Adding the department of natural resources to the definition of "employer" under RCW 41.37.010.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives VanDeWege, B. Sullivan, O'Brien, Eickmeyer, Lovick, McCoy, Lantz, Simpson, Williams and Dickerson).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/05/07, 95-0.

**Committee Activity:** Ways & Means: 3/20/07, 4/02/07 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Hatfield, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

**Staff:** Erik Sund (786-7454)

**Background:** The Public Safety Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) was created in 2004 and opened to members on July 1, 2006. The PSERS provides retirement benefits for state and local government employees who work in positions with law enforcement duties but are not eligible for membership in the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System. Members of the PSERS with at least 20 years of service will be eligible for full retirement benefits from age 60, five years earlier than the regular retirement age in PERS Plans 2 and 3. Members of PSERS with 20 years of service may also early retire beginning at age 53 with a 3 percent reduction in benefits per year of early retirement.

Membership in the PSERS is restricted by an individual's employer and by specific job criteria. The PSERS employers are defined as the Department of Corrections, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Gambling Commission, the Washington State Patrol, the Liquor Control Board, county corrections departments, the corrections departments of municipalities not classified as First Class cities, and employers employing statewide elective officials.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

To meet the individual job criteria, PSERS employees must work full-time and hold a position that requires completion of a certified criminal justice training course and which has the authority to arrest, investigate crimes, enforce the law, and carry a firearm; in which the primary duty is to ensure the custody and security of incarcerated individuals as a probation officer, corrections officer or jailer; that is a limited authority Washington Peace Officer; or in which the primary responsibility is to supervise employees who are eligible for membership under one of the previously listed membership criteria.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The list of employers that are PSERS-eligible is amended to remove "other employers employing statewide elective officials," and add the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Existing employees of the DNR who are made eligible for PSERS by the addition of the DNR to the list of PSERS eligible employers have the option of staying in PERS Plans 2 or 3 or moving to PSERS.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill would clarify the criteria for PSERS membership eligibility and aid the DNR in the recruitment and retention of qualified investigators. This policy is consistent with the original design of PSERS and the recommendations of the Select Committee on Pension Policy.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Larry Raedel, DNR.