
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2541

Brief Description: Maintaining a base of forest lands that may be used for commercial forestry.

Sponsors: Representatives Takko, Orcutt, Kessler, Kretz and Blake.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds a new stated purpose to the forest practices rules regarding maintaining forestry as a priority land use.
- Requires the Forest Practices Board to develop voluntary conservation measures prior to adopting new forest practices rules.
- Requires the Forest Practices Board to select the alternative proposed rule that retains the greatest economic value to forestry if it is presented with one or more proposed rules that have substantially equivalent environmental protection.

Hearing Date: 1/21/10

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Forest Practices Board (Board) is a 13-member independent panel chaired and administered by the Commissioner of Public Lands. The main duty of the Board is to adopt and maintain the forest practices rules. The forest practices rules are the administrative rules that govern all private and state forest practice activities and establish minimum standards for forest practices. They also provide procedures for the voluntary development of management plans, establish necessary administrative provisions, and allow for the development of watershed analyses [RCW 76.09.040].

There are 10 stated purposes of the forest practices rules [RCW 76.09.010]. These purposes include affording protection to forest soils, recognizing the public and private interest in

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profitable timber growing, avoiding unnecessary duplication of regulation, providing interagency and tribal coordination and cooperation, achieving compliance with water pollution laws, giving consideration to local planning efforts, and promoting permitting efficiency.

Summary of Bill:

A new stated purpose of the forest practices rules is added. The new purpose, given the equivalent weight of the existing purposes, is to promote and foster the economic success of the forest products industry, with the goal of maintaining forestry as a priority land use and securing the jobs made possible by a vibrant working land base. The Board, in the adoption of forest practices rules, are directed to pursue a balanced focus on voluntary, incentive-based measures.

Prior to adopting a new forest practices rule, the Board must, when appropriate, also propose related incentives for landowners to provide voluntary conservation measures. The voluntary conservation measures must identify criteria for determining the success of the measures. A proposed voluntary conservation measures must not rely on public funding unless that funding can be concurrently secured.

In instances when the Board is faced with one or more alternative proposed rules for adoption that have substantially equivalent environmental protection, it must select the option that retains the greatest economic value to forestry.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/11/10.

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