

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6848

As of February 22, 2010

Title: An act relating to forest practices applications.

Brief Description: Regarding forest practices applications.

Sponsors: Senator Tom.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/17/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: The Forest Practices Act directs the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to administer a permitting process to ensure that forest practices comply with applicable laws and rules. The permitting process requires that forest landowners submit an application or notification to DNR for proposed forest practices.

The requirement to submit an application prior to conducting forest practices varies depending on the specific type of activity to be conducted. Forest practices are divided into Classes I through IV, based on a particular activity's potential impact on public resources.

Currently, the application fee is \$50 for Class II, III, and IV applications relating to the commercial harvest of timber. The fee is \$500 for Class IV applications on lands being converted to a use that is incompatible with growing timber; or the forest land is located within the city limits or urban growth boundary. Except the fee is \$50 for practices in urban growth areas where the forest landowner provides either a written statement not to convert to another use for ten years or has an approved conversion option harvest plan.

Summary of Bill: The forest practices application fee is increased to \$150 for Class II, III, and IV applications relating to commercial harvest of timber. The fee is increased to \$1,500 for Class IV forest practices applications on lands being converted to other uses or on lands which are not to be reforested.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2010.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: CON: Forest landowners are facing the worst economic times since the 1930s - the timber industry is in a depression. Adding increased fees to these economically depressed forest landowners affects the bottom line of keeping working forests on the landscape.

OTHER: DNR does not have a position on this bill. The increase in forest practice application fees would offset approximately 10 percent of the current \$20 million program. The department is supportive of the Class IV fee increase.

Persons Testifying: CON: Debora Munguia, Washington Forest Protection Association.

OTHER: Lenny Young, DNR.