

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5438

As of March 4, 2011

Title: An act relating to the sale of timber from lands managed by the department of fish and wildlife.

Brief Description: Concerning the sale of timber from lands managed by the department of fish and wildlife.

Sponsors: Senators Morton, Schoesler, Swecker, Hewitt, Becker, Stevens, Honeyford and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Marine Waters: 2/02/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & MARINE WATERS

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) owns or manages nearly one million acres of public land for fish and wildlife, habitat conservation, and wildlife-related recreation. The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) may authorize the director of WDFW to sell timber, gravel, sand, and other materials or products from real property held by the department.

Summary of Bill: WDFW must evaluate opportunities for timber sales on department lands. WDFW must provide recommendations to the Commission on timber sales that would generate revenue while sustaining or enhancing the suitability of the landscape for fish and wildlife habitat.

Requires that the evaluations and recommendations be conducted within existing resources, and be presented to the Commission by December 1, 2012, and every five years thereafter. The proceeds from the sale of timber must be deposited into the State Wildlife Account and used for the operation and maintenance of department-managed lands.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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.

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: We are in an economic depression and it is important to evaluate our lands to determine how they might be best utilized. Some of the lands purchased in the last 20 years have not been harvested. These lands should be reviewed and a schedule should be set for harvesting the timber. The timber sales from the harvests on these lands could be used for the maintenance and operation of department-managed lands.

OTHER: The department recognizes the opportunities of harvesting timber for the value and benefits it provides to the habitat and to our resources. The Commission reviews the harvesting schedule annually. We would like to offer an amendment that would require the evaluation and recommendations on timber harvests to be presented to the Commission "at least" every five years. In addition, the department has acquired land through various federal grants. Some of these grants require that any moneys received through sales of timber go back into the grants.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Morton, prime sponsor.

OTHER: Jennifer Quan, WDFW.