
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1073

Brief Description: Concerning payments to counties in lieu of property taxes on state-owned land.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, Blake, Chandler, Haigh, Takko, Ross and Schmick.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Applies the open space tax rate option for payments in lieu of taxes for all counties.
- Transfers responsibility for dispersing payments in lieu of taxes from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to the Office of the State Treasurer.
- Allows counties to retain fines, forfeitures, reimbursements, and costs assessed and collected for certain WDFW violations.

Hearing Date: 1/24/13

Staff: Cherlyn Walden (786-7296).

Background:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Counties may elect to receive payments in lieu of property taxes (PILT) for game lands within the county upon remittance of all fines, forfeitures, reimbursements, and costs assessed and collected for violations of fish and wildlife laws and regulations. (RCW 77.12.201). Counties can choose between different PILT options: payment equal to open space or current use taxation for similar lands or the greater of seventy cents per acre per year or the amount paid in 1984, plus an assessment for noxious weeds. (RCW 77.12.203). The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is required to make payments to counties that elect to participate in the PILT by April 30th of each year.

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.

During the current biennium only, the requirement to remit all fines, forfeitures, reimbursements, and costs assessed and collected for violations of fish and wildlife laws and regulations has been removed. Predetermined PILT amounts for the counties are provided.

Department of Natural Resources

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is also required to make PILT contributions on certain properties managed by the DNR. (RCW 79.70.130, RCW 79.71.130). Under these provisions, the Office of the State Treasurer distributes the PILT on behalf of the DNR rather than the DNR making payments directly.

Summary of Bill:

The responsibility for making payments in lieu of property taxes (PILT) to the counties is transferred from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to the Office of the State Treasurer. In addition, all the PILT contributions will be based on the open space tax rate under chapter 84.34 RCW. Counties will no longer be able to choose to calculate the PILT as the greater of seventy cents per acre per year or the amount paid in 1984.

Counties no longer are required to remit all fines, forfeitures, reimbursements, and costs assessed and collected for violations of fish and wildlife laws and regulations. Counties also will not have to elect to receive the PILT.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested.

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