

SSB 6657 - S AMD TO S-5171.8 776

By Senator Becker

1 On page 14, after line 14, insert

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3 "NEW SECTION. Sec. 203. A new section is added to chapter  
4 76.04 RCW to read as follows:

5 PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT FOR VOLUNTEERS.

6 (1) The department must provide all necessary personal  
7 protection equipment at no cost to up to one hundred fire  
8 suppression volunteers for use while dispatched to wildland fire  
9 suppression duty. If the department cannot provide the personal  
10 protection equipment, it must offer to reimburse a volunteer who  
11 purchases new equipment suitable for the kind of volunteer work to  
12 be performed. If the volunteer accepts reimbursement, the volunteer  
13 must surrender the equipment for which he or she was reimbursed when  
14 the volunteer period comes to an end.

15 (2) The department must ensure the inventory of personal  
16 protection equipment for volunteers is kept in good condition  
17 through periodic safety inspections. The personal protection  
18 equipment must be stored in a geographic area and manner for quick  
19 distribution to volunteers when needed for wildland fire  
20 suppression.

21 (3) For purposes of this section, "volunteers" means qualified  
22 individuals who are not affiliated with a fire department or  
23 district and who perform fire suppression activities for the  
24 department without any expectation of compensation. The department  
25 must require proof of adequate training and possession of valid  
26 incident qualifications, such as those commonly known as "red cards"

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1 or "blue cards" before allowing any volunteer to assist the  
2 department in fire suppression activities.

3 (4) Qualified volunteers identified in subsection (3) of this  
4 section may be dispatched to support wildland fire suppression  
5 efforts through the coordinated resource ordering systems of local  
6 or state firefighting organizations. Volunteers are prohibited from  
7 independently assigning themselves to wildfires without an official  
8 resource order.

9 (5) By December 31, 2016, and December 31, 2017, the department  
10 must report to the legislature on the resources required to  
11 implement and maintain the requirements of this section, the number  
12 of volunteers provided equipment under this section, and any  
13 recommendations for improvement. For efficiency, the department may  
14 include the report required in this section as part of the report on  
15 the forest health and wildfire management strategic plan, as  
16 required under section 101(3) of this act.

17 (6) Nothing in this section prohibits the department from  
18 conducting condensed safety training on the site of a wildland fire  
19 in order to utilize available volunteers.

20 (7) No civil liability may be imposed by any court on the state  
21 or its officers and employees for any adverse impacts resulting from  
22 the training, equipping, or dispatching of volunteers under the  
23 provisions of this section except upon proof of gross negligence or  
24 willful or wanton misconduct."

25 Renumber the remaining sections consecutively and correct any  
26 internal references accordingly.

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EFFECT: Requires the department of natural resources to provide personal protection equipment at no cost to up to 100 trained, qualified volunteers not associated with a local fire district or fire department. Requires the department to report the legislature in 2016 and 2017 on the number of volunteers participating in the program and the resources required to maintain to the program.

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