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SENATE BILL 6489

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State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senators Becker, Lillas, Rivers, Bailey, Parlette, Braun, Angel, Brown, Schoesler, Warnick, Honeyford, Dammeier, Pearson, Billig, King, and Hewitt

Read first time 01/22/16. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources & Parks.

1 AN ACT Relating to fire suppression volunteers; and adding a new  
2 section to chapter 76.04 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 76.04  
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) To maximize the effective utilization of qualified wildland  
7 fire suppression volunteers, the department is required to:

8 (a) Compile and maintain a master list of qualified wildland fire  
9 suppression volunteers who have valid incident qualifications for the  
10 kind of volunteer work to be performed. In order to be included on a  
11 master list of qualified wildland fire suppression volunteers:

12 (i) Volunteers in fire crews must have adequate training and  
13 qualifications, including possessing a valid incident qualification  
14 card, commonly called a red card; and

15 (ii) Volunteers other than those identified in (a)(i) of this  
16 subsection must have training and qualifications evidenced by  
17 possession of a valid department qualification and safety document,  
18 commonly called a blue card;

19 (b) Make the lists of qualified wildland fire suppression  
20 volunteers available to county legislative authorities, emergency  
21 management departments, and local fire districts;

1 (c) Cooperate with federal wildland firefighting agencies to  
2 maximize, based on predicted need, the efficient use of local  
3 resources in close proximity to wildland fire incidents;

4 (d) Provide all necessary safety and fire suppression equipment  
5 at no cost to each volunteer. If the department cannot provide the  
6 necessary safety and fire suppression equipment, it must offer to  
7 reimburse any volunteer who purchases new equipment suitable for the  
8 kind of volunteer work to be performed. If the volunteer accepts  
9 reimbursement, he or she must surrender the equipment for which he or  
10 she was reimbursed when the volunteer period comes to an end; and

11 (e) Maintain its inventory of safety and fire suppression  
12 equipment for volunteers in good condition and conduct periodic  
13 inspections to ensure safety. The safety and fire suppression  
14 equipment must be stored in a geographic area and manner such that it  
15 is easily distributed to volunteers without delay when needed for  
16 fire suppression.

17 (2) Nothing in subsection (1) of this section prohibits the  
18 department from conducting condensed safety training on the site of a  
19 wildland fire in order to utilize available volunteers not included  
20 on a master list of qualified wildland fire suppression volunteers.

21 (3) For purposes of this section, "volunteers" means qualified  
22 individuals performing fire suppression activities for the department  
23 without any expectation of compensation.

24 (4) No civil liability may be imposed by any court on the state  
25 or its officers and employees for any adverse impacts resulting from  
26 training provided by the department under the provisions of this  
27 section except upon proof of gross negligence or willful or wanton  
28 misconduct.

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