
Appropriations Committee

HB 1613

Brief Description: Making expenditures from the budget stabilization account for 2015 wildfires.

Sponsors: Representatives Dent, Pettigrew, Chandler, Griffey, Ortiz-Self, Kagi, Johnson and Fey; by request of Washington State Patrol.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriates a total of \$12.5 million from the Budget Stabilization Account for fire suppression and mobilization.

Hearing Date: 2/6/17

Staff: Meghan Morris (786-7119).

Background:

Budget Stabilization Account.

In 2007 the voters ratified a constitutional amendment that created the Budget Stabilization Account (BSA) as Article VII, section 12 of the state Constitution. Each year, the State Treasurer must deposit 1 percent of general state revenues (GSR) into the constitutionally created BSA. The term GSR is defined in the Constitution and is largely equivalent to the statutory State General Fund (GFS).

In general, appropriations from the BSA require a three-fifths majority in each chamber of the Legislature, but in the case of a catastrophic event declared by the Governor or low employment growth, the Legislature may appropriate from the BSA with a constitutional majority vote of each chamber.

Four-Year Balanced Budget.

The four-year balanced budget requirement, sometimes referred to as the Outlook, contains two balance requirements. First, the operating budget must be balanced in the general fund and

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related funds in the current biennium. Second, the estimated maintenance level costs of that budget in the ensuing biennium may not exceed the fiscal resources estimated for the ensuing biennium. However, the requirement to balance in the ensuing biennium does not apply in a biennium in which appropriations are made from the BSA.

Fire Suppression and Mobilization.

The Chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) has the authority to mobilize jurisdictions under the Washington State Fire Services Mobilization Plan (mobilization plan). The purpose of the mobilization plan is to provide a mechanism to quickly notify, assemble, and deploy fire service personnel and equipment to any local fire jurisdiction in Washington that has expended or will expend all available local and mutual aid resources in attempting to manage fires, disasters, or other events that jeopardize a jurisdiction's ability to provide for the protection of life and property. The State Fire Marshal within the WSP serves as the state fire resources coordinator when the mobilization plan is activated.

The Legislature traditionally appropriates a base amount to cover fire suppression costs. When WSP's estimated final costs for fire suppression exceed the base amount for the fiscal year, the agency requests additional funding in a supplemental budget. In fiscal year 2016 the Legislature appropriated \$34.4 million from the BSA for the WSP to cover costs for the 2015 wildfires that were subject to a governor state of emergency declaration. Due to the timing of receiving invoices from those events, the WSP did not expend its entire fiscal year 2016 BSA appropriation.

Summary of Bill:

Legislative findings are made that the WSP did not expend its entire fiscal year 2016 BSA appropriation and therefore needs a portion of those moneys reappropriated into fiscal year 2017.

The sum of \$12.5 million is appropriated from the BSA to the Washington State Patrol for fire service mobilization costs.

Appropriations in the act do not suspend the requirement to balance the budget in the ensuing biennium under the four-year balanced budget laws.

Appropriation: The sum of \$12.5 million is appropriated from the BSA to the Washington State Patrol for fire service mobilization costs.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.