
Public Safety Committee

SSB 6283

Brief Description: Extending an expiration date that affects state fire service mobilization.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Takko, Rivers and Palumbo).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Extends the expiration date from July 1, 2019, to July 1, 2024, on prior temporary changes to fire services mobilization, including expansion of the scope of mobilization to include all risk resources.

Hearing Date: 2/19/18

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

The Chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) has the authority to mobilize jurisdictions under the Washington State Fire Services Mobilization Plan. A mobilization is warranted when a local disaster necessitates resources beyond those available through existing agreements. During a large-scale emergency, mobilization includes the redistribution of regional or statewide firefighting resources to either direct emergency incident assignments or to assignments in communities where firefighting resources are needed.

From the time a state mobilization is declared, all fire protection authorities providing resources in response to the mobilization declaration are eligible for expense reimbursement. State and local agencies that participate in a mobilization generally receive reimbursement through the state's Disaster Response Account.

In 2015 the Legislature expanded "mobilization" beyond general firefighting to include all risk resources regularly provided by fire departments, districts, and regional fire protection authorities. "All risk resources" include those resources regularly provided by fire departments,

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fire districts, and regional fire protection authorities in response to natural or manmade incidents, including but not limited to wildland fires, landslides, earthquakes, floods, and contagious diseases. The definition of "mobilization" was also amended to state that fire department resources may not be mobilized to assist law enforcement with police activities during a civil protest or demonstration, but fire authorities are not restricted from providing medical care or aid and firefighting when mobilized for any purpose.

The Chief of the WSP must report annually regarding each emergency or disaster in which the Washington State Fire Service Mobilization Plan was used for purposes other than fire suppression.

The expanded scope of state fire services mobilization expires July 1, 2019.

Summary of Bill:

The July 1, 2019, expiration date on the changes to fire services mobilization is delayed until July 1, 2024. The expanded definition of mobilization to include all risk resources, and the prohibition against mobilization of fire resources to assist with police activities during protests and demonstrations, remain in effect until that date.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 16, 2018.

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