

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2010

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, March 28, 2017

Title: An act relating to the prevention of homelessness in wildfire areas.

Brief Description: Addressing homelessness in wildfire areas.

Sponsors: House Committee on Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Maycumber, Dent, Blake, Kretz, Dye and Manweller).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/17, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 3/16/17, 3/28/17 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Directs the Department of Natural Resources to provide firefighting equipment and homeowner fire prevention education in Northeastern Washington.
- Authorizes DNR to transfer depreciated fire engines to local fire districts.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Hawkins, Vice Chair; Van De Wege, Ranking Minority Member; Fortunato and McCoy.

Staff: Kelsey Morfitt (786-7407)

Background: The Legislature designated the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as the state's manager for forest fire prevention and suppression activities. In this role, DNR must lead and supervise all matters pertaining to the state's forest fire service.

Washington Counties that border Canada include Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011-2015 American Community Survey estimates, 22 percent of Ferry County's population lives below the federal poverty level. Approximately 21.5 percent of Pend Oreille, 21.2 percent of Okanogan, and 18 percent of Stevens County residents also live below the poverty level.

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.

State statute defines low income as when a resident's adjusted gross income is 80 percent or less of the median income of the county. This number is also adjusted for family size, as determined by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Summary of Amended Bill: Subject to appropriations, DNR must administer the following firefighting equipment and fire prevention services to counties in Eastern Washington bordering Canada:

- radio communication equipment;
- education and outreach;
- technical assistance;
- fuel mitigation; and
- other residential risk reduction measures.

DNR must prioritize funding to counties with a disproportionately higher percentage of low-income residents in areas with a higher wildfire risk and a shortage of reliable equipment and resources. DNR may transfer ownership of depreciated fire engines to local fire districts that are in wildfire prone areas and where the median household income is below the state average.

EFFECT OF NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT(S):

- Authorizes DNR to transfer ownership of depreciated fire engines valued over \$500 to local fire districts where the median household income is below the state average and adds an emergency clause.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Engrossed Substitute House Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This program provides education and outreach, fuel mitigation, and other fire prevention services to low-income communities that may not be able to access such resources otherwise.

DNR owns several depreciated fire engines, valued over \$500, that the DNR would like to transfer to fire districts in low-income, fire-prone areas. These fire engines should be transferred immediately to prepare for this year's fire season.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Jacquelin Maycumber, Prime Sponsor; Dave Warren, DNR.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.