

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6283

As of January 29, 2018

Title: An act relating to fire service mobilization.

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

Sponsors: Senators Takko, Rivers and Palumbo.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/26/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes prior temporary changes to fire services mobilization permanent, including expansion of the scope of mobilization to include all risk resources as well as annual reporting on the uses and costs for non-fire suppression emergencies and disasters.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

Background: A mobilization is used when resources beyond those available through existing agreements will be requested and, when available, sent in response to an emergency or disaster situation that has exceeded the capabilities of available local resources. During a large scale emergency, mobilization includes the redistribution of regional or statewide resources to either direct emergency incident assignments or to an assignment in communities where resources are needed.

The chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) has the authority to mobilize jurisdictions under the Washington State Fire Services Mobilization Plan (Plan). The WSP state fire marshal serves as the state fire resources coordinator when a state mobilization plan is mobilized. Once a state mobilization is declared, all state and local agencies that participate in a mobilization generally receive reimbursement through the state's Disaster Response Account (Account). The WSP, in consultation with the Office of Financial Management and the Washington Military Department, is responsible for developing procedures to facilitate

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reimbursement to state agencies and local jurisdictions from appropriate federal and state funds when state agencies and jurisdictions are mobilized under the Plan.

All-Risk Resources. In 2015, the Legislature authorized an expansion of the term mobilization to include all-risk resources, rather than only firefighting resources, and prohibited fire resources from being mobilized to assist with police activities during civil protest or demonstration. All-risk resources include those resources regularly provided by fire authorities in response to natural and man-made incidents. This includes, but is not limited to resources provided to respond to wildland fires, landslides, earthquakes, floods and contagious diseases. The WSP must annually report on the uses and costs of the mobilization plan for non-fire suppression emergencies and disasters. The expanded scope of the state fire services mobilization expires on July 1, 2019.

Disaster Response Account. The state's Account is a dedicated account in the State Treasury. Money may be placed in the Account from legislative appropriations and transfers, federal appropriations, and other lawful sources. Expenditures from the Account are used to support state agency and local government disaster response and recovery efforts. There have been 224 mobilization events since the inception of the Plan in 1994. Of the events, 222 were fire-related; and two were non-fire events, the 1999 World Trade Organization riots and the 2008 Rosalia Motorcycle Rally.

Summary of Bill: The July 1, 2019, expiration date on the changes to fire services mobilization is removed. 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, are permanent.

The WSP must continue to report annually on the uses and costs of the mobilization plan for non-fire suppression emergencies and disasters.

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: PRO: The Legislature made this change a few years ago. The expiration date was included at the time due to concern that it may be overused, but it has not been overused so we should take the expiration date off and let this continue to be law. The fire defense committee does a great job with these mobilizations to only use them when needed on the big emergencies. Although the use of these resources for an all-risk hazard has not occurred since the passage of the bill in 2015, it should continue to be available as a tool to allow for response to all types of incidents.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Dean Takko, Prime Sponsor; Ryan Spiller, Washington Fire Commissioners Association; Warren Peterson, Fire Chief, East Olympia Fire District 6.

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