
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5546

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senate Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Hawkins, McCoy, Fortunato, Pearson, Braun, Sheldon, Rivers, and O'Ban)

READ FIRST TIME 02/16/17.

1 AN ACT Relating to proactively addressing wildfire risk by
2 creating a forest health treatment assessment; and adding a new
3 section to chapter 76.06 RCW.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 76.06
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) The department must establish a forest health treatment
8 assessment framework designed to achieve substantial completion of
9 treatment of one million acres of lands by 2033. For each biennium,
10 the framework must include:

11 (a) A plan to identify and assess one hundred thousand acres per
12 year of fire-prone lands and communities that are in need of forest
13 health treatment, including the use of prescribed fire or mechanical
14 treatment, such as thinning.

15 (i) The scope of the assessment must include lands protected by
16 the department as well as lands outside of the department's fire
17 protection responsibilities that could pose a high risk to department
18 protected lands during a fire.

19 (ii) The assessment must identify for the 2019-2021 biennium, and
20 each subsequent biennium, areas in need of treatment, the type or
21 types of treatment recommended, data and planning needs to carry out

1 recommended treatment, and the estimated cost of recommended
2 treatment.

3 (b) Prioritized areas for treatment for those areas assessed in
4 the previous biennium, along with treatment of as many acres as can
5 be treated with funds appropriated for that specific purpose. To
6 expedite initial treatments under this section, for the 2017-2019
7 biennium the department may prioritize and treat lands currently
8 identified by the department in its 2017-2019 biennium budget
9 requests as pilot treatment projects if funds are appropriated for
10 that specific purpose.

11 (2) In developing the framework and implementing the assessments
12 and treatments, the department must:

13 (a) To promote the efficient use of resources, utilize and build
14 on the forest health strategic planning initiated under section
15 308(11), chapter 36, Laws of 2016 sp. sess. to the maximum extent
16 practicable.

17 (b) Develop and utilize treatment prioritization criteria, a
18 recommended workflow for identified treatments and any necessary
19 retreatment or maintenance, a process to account for changing risks
20 over time, a method for addressing data and inventory needs, a
21 process for coordination with willing landowners on identified
22 treatments that cross ownerships, and a recommended strategy for plan
23 implementation.

24 (c)(i) Request that the commissioner appoint a forest health
25 advisory committee to assist in developing the framework, the
26 assessments and prioritization list, and the report required in this
27 section consistent with the twenty-year strategic planning process/
28 forest health strategic planning initiated under section 308(11),
29 chapter 36, Laws of 2016 sp. sess.

30 (ii) The committee should: (A) Include large and small forest
31 landowners, wildland fire response organizations, representatives
32 from milling and log transportation industries, representatives from
33 the forest collaboratives that may exist in the affected areas during
34 each biennium, representatives from highly affected communities and
35 community preparedness organizations, conservation groups and other
36 interested parties as the commissioner determines would be most
37 helpful in discharging the responsibilities established in this
38 section; and (B) consult with relevant local, state, and federal
39 agencies, and tribes.

1 (3) By December 1st of each even-numbered year, the department
2 must provide the appropriate committees of the legislature and the
3 office of financial management with:

4 (a) A request for appropriations designed to carry out forest
5 health treatments during the upcoming biennium that are consistent
6 with the forest health treatment goals and framework established by
7 the department;

8 (b) A prioritized list and brief summary of forest health
9 treatments the department intends to carry out in the upcoming
10 biennium with the requested appropriations, including the relevant
11 information from the assessment; and

12 (c) A list and brief summary of forest health treatments the
13 department carried out in the preceding biennium, including total
14 funding available, costs for completed treatment, and treatment
15 outcomes. The summary must include any barriers to plan
16 implementation and legislative or administrative recommendations to
17 address those barriers.

18 (4) The department must operate the program within the
19 appropriations specifically provided for the program.

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