
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6548

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senate State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Palumbo and Van De Wege)

READ FIRST TIME 02/02/18.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the joint legislative task force
2 on fire service administration; creating new sections; and providing
3 an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the
6 administration of emergency response and fire suppression services in
7 Washington state is fragmented at the statewide level with
8 responsibilities being fulfilled by the state patrol, the state
9 military department, and the department of natural resources among
10 many other governmental and private entities. It is the intent of the
11 legislature to examine this current administrative structure and
12 division of responsibilities and to recommend improvements which are
13 intended to streamline, consolidate, and increase the efficiency of
14 Washington's fire suppression and emergency response services.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) A joint legislative task force on fire
16 service administration is established, with members as provided in
17 this subsection.

18 (a) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from
19 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

1 (b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one
2 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
3 representatives.

4 (c) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
5 representatives jointly shall appoint members representing the
6 following:

- 7 (i) Washington state patrol;
- 8 (ii) Washington state military department;
- 9 (iii) Washington state department of natural resources;
- 10 (iv) Washington state council of firefighters;
- 11 (v) Washington fire chiefs;
- 12 (vi) Washington state firefighters' association;
- 13 (vii) Washington fire commissioners association;
- 14 (viii) Association of Washington cities;
- 15 (ix) Washington state association of counties;
- 16 (x) Washington federally recognized Indian tribes;
- 17 (xi) Washington environmental proponents;
- 18 (xii) Timber interests;
- 19 (xiii) Private fire contractors; and
- 20 (xiv) the state ethnic and diversity commissions.

21 (d) The governor shall appoint one member representing the
22 Washington forest practices board.

23 (2) The task force shall:

24 (a) Request the participation of and consult with: The United
25 States forest service, the bureau of land management, and the United
26 States parks service.

27 (b) Review and assess the current structure and responsibilities
28 for providing fire and nonpolice emergency response services within
29 Washington state.

30 (c) Review and assess the current structure and responsibilities
31 for providing fire and nonpolice emergency response services in other
32 western states.

33 (d) Make recommendations for improving the structure and
34 efficiency of Washington's response administration and hierarchy.

35 (e) Make recommendations on establishing fire protection for
36 areas that do not have any protection.

37 (f) Make recommendations on regionalizing and consolidating fire
38 protection jurisdictions.

39 (g) Make recommendations about the adequacy and stability of fire
40 service funding.

1 (h) Make recommendations related to the adequacy of existing
2 communication systems.

3 (i) Review the department of natural resources' wildland fire
4 protection strategic plan and give due consideration to the
5 strategies, findings, and recommendations contained in the plan in
6 preparing its report.

7 (3) The task force shall choose its cochairs from among its
8 legislative membership, which must include one representative from
9 the house of representatives and one senator from the senate. The
10 legislative membership shall convene the initial meeting of the task
11 force no later than July 1, 2018. The task force shall convene at
12 least four meetings.

13 (4) The task force shall submit a report, which may include
14 findings and recommendations, to the governor and the appropriate
15 committees of the legislature by December 1, 2019. A minority report
16 must be submitted along with the task force's report if requested by
17 any member of the task force.

18 (5) Staff support for the task force shall be provided by the
19 senate committee services and the house of representatives office of
20 program research.

21 (6) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for
22 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative
23 members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they
24 are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer,
25 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for
26 other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

27 (7) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the
28 senate and the house of representatives. Task force expenditures are
29 subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee
30 and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their
31 successor committees.

32 (8) This section expires December 31, 2019.

--- END ---