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ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL 1894

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State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Representatives Dent and Griffey

Read first time 02/04/19. Referred to Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to additional temporary duties for the wildland  
2 fire advisory committee; creating a new section; and providing an  
3 expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The commissioner of public lands must  
6 direct the wildland fire advisory committee established in RCW  
7 76.04.179 to review, analyze, and make recommendations on the  
8 following issues related to wild fire prevention, response, and  
9 suppression activities within our state:

10 (a) The committee, with the assistance of department of natural  
11 resources' personnel, must approximately quantify the areas in the  
12 state that are not contained within an established fire district nor  
13 subject to a planned fire response and make recommendations as to how  
14 these areas could be protected as well as a source of funding for any  
15 recommended activities. In doing so, the committee must, in time for  
16 inclusion in the December 31, 2018, status report: Review the  
17 relevant recommendations contained in the joint legislative audit and  
18 review committee's 2017 final report on fees assessed for forest fire  
19 protection; analyze and develop recommendations on potential  
20 administrative and legislative actions including, for example, the  
21 process proposed in chapter . . . (Substitute Senate Bill No. 6575),

1 Laws of 2018; and consult with any relevant stakeholders, as deemed  
2 necessary by the committee, that are not represented on the  
3 committee.

4 (b) The committee must examine the value of community programs  
5 that educate homeowners and engage in preventive projects within wild  
6 fire risk communities, such as firewise, and make recommendations on  
7 whether these programs should be advanced, and if so, how, including  
8 potential sources of ongoing funding for the programs.

9 (c) The committee must also develop plans to help protect non-  
10 English speaking residents during wildfire emergencies. The committee  
11 may enlist the assistance from the state ethnic and diversity  
12 commissions or any other organizations who have expertise in public  
13 outreach to non-English speaking people.

14 (2) The department of natural resources must provide to the  
15 appropriate committees of the legislature a status report of the  
16 committee's efforts by December 31, 2018, and issue a report with the  
17 committee's recommendations by November 15, 2020.

18 (3) In addition to the topics described in subsection (1) of this  
19 section, as part of the final report as required by subsection (2) of  
20 this section, and subject to the availability of amounts appropriated  
21 for this specific purpose, the wildland fire advisory committee must  
22 review, analyze, and make recommendations on the following issues  
23 related to the establishment of rangeland fire protection  
24 associations and other fire protection methods within our state to  
25 address unprotected and underprotected lands.

26 (a) The committee, with the assistance of department of natural  
27 resources' personnel, must map areas of the state east of the crest  
28 of the Cascade mountains that are not within an established fire  
29 protection district, nor subject to a planned wildland fire response.

30 (b) The committee, through consultation with landowners, local  
31 fire protection districts, wildfire protection agencies, and other  
32 interested parties, must identify and make recommendations as to  
33 which methods of protection may be best suited for these areas when  
34 considering values at risk, including wildlife habitat, available  
35 response resources, and geography in the area. Methods of protection  
36 may include, but are not limited to, annexation by adjacent fire  
37 protection districts, creation of new fire protection districts, and  
38 the broadening of the jurisdiction of the department of natural  
39 resources.

1           (c) The committee must make recommendations on the appropriate  
2 level of training and the personal protective equipment standards for  
3 rangeland fire protection associations.

4           (d) The committee must make an estimate of the costs to establish  
5 and maintain rangeland fire protection associations. In addition, the  
6 committee must make recommendations for appropriate fees to support  
7 the various identified methods of protection, including increasing  
8 fire protection district levies and fees collected by the department  
9 of natural resources.

10           (4) This section expires December 31, 2020.

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