



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources
Peter Goldmark - Commissioner of Public Lands



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

Wildfire Protection on State-owned Lands

HB 2440 (Wilcox)

SB 6144 (Ranker)

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintains the largest on-call firefighting service in the state, providing wildfire protection services to nearly 13 million acres of public and private forestland. DNR has provided wildfire fighting services on non-forested, state-managed lands, such as those managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), but lacks the statutory authority to do so. This bill would:

- help sustain the protection of natural resources in the face of the state's budget crisis,
- help protect public and private infrastructure including buildings, fences and irrigation,
- make government more efficient and save taxpayer dollars by using DNR's effective and low-cost wildfire capabilities.



Background

Under Commissioner Peter Goldmark and Director Phil Anderson's leadership, DNR and DFW entered into a broad Master Interagency Agreement in 2010 for shared services. Both agencies wish to include firefighting services under this agreement.

DNR is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements for fire protection, provided they are with other fire protection agencies. At the request of DFW, DNR has for more than 15 years responded to the need for fire suppression on certain non-forested DFW-managed lands in eastern Washington. Although DNR is authorized to protect state and private forestlands or other lands that may carry wildfire to such forestlands, the agency recently discovered that it lacks underlying statutory authority to offer wildfire protection on DFW's non-forested lands.

For government to be more efficient by functionally aligning services and to take advantage of DNR's firefighting capabilities, DNR and DFW are proposing to revise current law to authorize DNR to protect DFW's non-forested lands from wildfire on a fee-for-service basis.

Proposal

- DNR's fire protection authority is expanded in RCW 76.04.015 to allow DNR, on a reimbursable basis, to protect non-forested lands managed by the state, provided that doing so does not interfere with existing obligations in current law.
- DNR's forest protection cooperative agreements authority is expanded beyond fire protection agencies to include other agencies that manage non-forested lands.

Fiscal Impact

DNR/DFW anticipates no fiscal impact if this proposal were enacted.

CONTACTS: Heath Packard | Legislative Affairs | Washington State Department of Natural Resources
1111 Washington St. SE | PO Box 47001 | Olympia, WA 98504-7001 | Phone 360-902-1015 | heath.packard@dnr.wa.gov

Ann Larson | Legislative Affairs | Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
1111 Washington St. SE | Olympia, WA 98504-1091 | Phone 360-902-2226 | ann.larson@dfw.wa.gov FS11-026