

# Initiative No. 1806

January 29, 2021

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## BILL REQUEST - CODE REVISER'S OFFICE

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BILL REQ. #: I-4116.1/21

ATTY/TYPIST: ML:jcm

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

# Initiative No. 1806

January 29, 2021

AN ACT Relating to funding forest health activities for the protection of people, homes, and the environment through issuance of state bonds; and adding a new chapter to Title 76 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 1.** The people of Washington find that preventing catastrophic wildfires is an important and urgent duty of the state, as doing so protects the public as well as homes in the rural and urban edge communities, keeps forests intact, and maintains clean air for the benefit of all citizens. The people also find that funding forest health activities is an active means to prevent catastrophic wildfires, by reducing fuel loads that lead to such fires. Providing for active forest health treatments also maintains a working forest environment that sustains jobs, maintains healthy forests, and keeps the public that live near areas of wildfire threat aware, engaged, and educated about minimizing wildfire risk.

Previous acts of the legislature, including chapter 95, Laws of 2017 and chapter 248, Laws of 2017, have called upon the department of natural resources to create plans for solving the state's forest health issues, with specific targets for a 20-year plan and for assessing and treating 1,000,000 acres of land by 2033. The department of natural resources has created the 20-year forest health strategic plan. The people intend to fund implementation of the plan with this chapter.

NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 2.** (1) For the purposes of providing needed funding for forest health activities, the state finance committee is authorized to issue general obligation bonds of the state of Washington in the sum of \$500,000,000, or as much thereof as may be required, to finance all or a part of the cost of these projects and

all costs incidental thereto. The bonds issued under the authority of this section may be known as Washington forest health bonds.

(2) Bonds authorized in this section must be sold in the manner, at the time or times, in amounts, and at such prices as the state finance committee determines.

(3) The authorization to issue bonds contained in this chapter does not expire until the full authorization has been issued.

(4) No bonds authorized in this section may be offered for sale without prior legislative appropriation of the net proceeds of the sale of the bonds.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The proceeds from the sale of bonds authorized in section 2 of this act must be deposited in the Washington forest health bond account created in section 5 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) Bonds issued under section 2 of this act must state that they are a general obligation of the state of Washington, must pledge the full faith and credit of the state to the payment of the principal thereof and the interest thereon, and must contain an unconditional promise to pay the principal and interest as the same become due.

(2) The owner and holder of each of the bonds or the trustee for the owner and holder of any of the bonds may by mandamus or other appropriate proceeding require the transfer and payment of funds as directed in this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The Washington forest health bond account is created in the state treasury. All receipts from direct appropriations from the legislature or moneys directed to the account from any other source must be deposited in the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. The account is intended to fund projects using proceeds from the sale of tax-exempt bonds. Expenditures from the account are for forest

health activities consistent with laws pertaining to forest health found in Titles 43, 76, and 79 RCW.

NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 6.**   It is the intent of the people of Washington that the proceeds of the sale of new bonds authorized in this chapter will be appropriated in phases over eight biennia, beginning with the 2021-2023 biennium, to provide additional funding for forest health activities. This chapter is not intended to limit the legislature's ability to appropriate bond proceeds if the full amount authorized in this chapter has not been appropriated after eight biennia, and the authorization to issue bonds contained in this chapter does not expire until the full authorization has been appropriated and issued.

NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 7.**   This act may be known and cited as the funding forest health treatment to protect Washingtonians and reduce catastrophic wildfires act.

NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 8.**   Sections 1 through 7 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 76 RCW.

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