

HB 1309 / SB 5188

Removal of Land from Current Use Property Tax Classification Due to Natural Disasters

The proposed bill aligns Designated Forest Land (DFL) with the provisions of Open Space Timber (OST) concerning the removal of the compensating tax due to natural disaster.

Adjacent Parcels Not Treated Equally

Currently, property can be removed from open space designation due to natural disaster without incurring a compensating tax penalty - this can include back taxes, interest, and penalties. Designated Forest Lands (DFL) are not exempt from incurring a compensating tax penalty if removed from their designation due to a natural disaster (such as wildfire, flood, windstorm, earthquake, etc.). Often times both property classifications can be found on adjacent properties.

The Bill is a Result of Issues Arising from Wildfires

The proposed legislation came about following issues following the Chelan Complex Fire, which burned over 54,500 acres of land, the 2014 Carlton Complex Fire burning 250,000 acres of private land, and the 2015 Okanogan Complex Fire which burned 270,000 acres of private land.

The 2014/15 Wildfire Seasons
Burned more than 500,000
Acres of Private Land

Creating Uniformity

The bill would create the same exemption for Designated Forest Lands that currently exists in Open Space Timber if properties are removed due to a natural disaster.

Property owners can choose to stay in the program by complying with the exemption requirements spelled out in statute.

Staying in the exemption does not trigger the compensating tax.

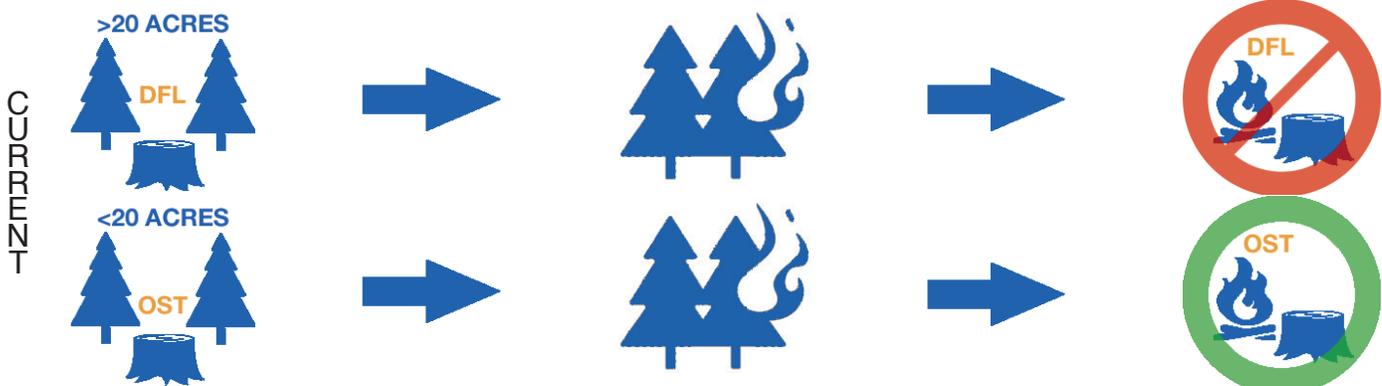
Does Not Impact County Budgets

Counties do not budget for penalties received from being removed from the program, funds received are unanticipated revenue.

Exemption Available

Natural Disaster

Waiver Status



There are different requirements to be classified as DFL or OST, however the major difference is parcel size