

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Item 39: Department of Forestry Centralized Administration Costs

To: Ways and Means Full Committee
From: Natural Resources Subcommittee
Carrier: Representative Levy

The Natural Resources Subcommittee heard a request from the Department of Forestry on centralized administration costs.

HB 3940 passed during the 2025 legislative session and ceased the assessment of public and private landowners for the Department of Forestry's centralized administration costs through the Forest Patrol Assessment for fire protection. The rates for the first year of this biennium were approved by the Board of Forestry on June 4, 2025, prior to the effective date of HB 3940, and therefore the assessment for the first year of the biennium includes funding for administration. The next board consideration of assessment rates is anticipated in June 2026 and will exclude centralized administration costs.

HB 3940 also directs the agency to request General Fund for centralized administration costs as part of the agency request budget. While the agency will develop this request for the next biennial budget, it is faced with an operational shortfall for the second year of the current biennium totaling \$11.6 million.

The Natural Resources Subcommittee recommends that the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means appropriate \$11,600,000 General Fund to the

Department of Forestry in a budget reconciliation bill during the 2026 legislative session for centralized administration costs.