

## HB 2472 AND SB 6225

### Granting Natural Resource Investigators General Authority

*A simple, zero-cost reform that will increase law enforcement efficiency and effectiveness.*

**Who are the Natural Resource Investigators?** DNR has a Law Enforcement team of 8 Natural Resource Investigators, led by Chief Larry Raedel. These commissioned officers are stationed in DNR's six regions to enforce all state laws, investigate wildfires statewide, prevent theft of natural resources, patrol DNR lands, and work with local law enforcement authorities. Officers coordinate with Washington State Patrol, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and local law enforcement, and are often the first to respond to calls on and off DNR land.

**Are they real law enforcement officers?** Yes. These uniformed officers are required to complete the Washington State Criminal Justice Commission Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) training and serve four years as general authority law enforcement officers before qualifying as a Natural Resource Investigator. Officers are deputized by local sheriffs in at least 25 counties across the state.

**What does the bill do?** The bill grants these officers general authority to enforce the laws of Washington State. Currently, officers are only able to respond to WSP (or other) dispatches if they are deputized in that particular county. *Simply put, granting general authority enables more qualified officers to enforce the law.*

**Will this create new training or compensation costs?** No. These officers already meet all the training requirements for general authority. Nothing in the bill reclassifies the officers or affects their compensation in any way.

**Does this put the officers into LEOFF?** No. Section 3 of the bill specifically states: "Nothing in this section or RCW 10.93.020 confers membership to natural resource investigators in the Washington law enforcement officers' and firefighters' retirement system under chapter 41.26 RCW."

**Why should I support the bill?** In a time of budget cuts to law enforcement and public safety at every level, we need reforms that will make the most of the law enforcement officers we already have. *All this bill does is enable these qualified, experienced law enforcement officers to enforce state law - without increasing any costs to taxpayers.*

