

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6282

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Parks, Fish & Wildlife, February 2, 2004

Title: An act relating to personal use shellfish licenses.

Brief Description: Concerning personal use shellfish licenses.

Sponsors: Senators Doumit, Oke, Berkey, Stevens and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Parks, Fish & Wildlife: 1/27/04, 2/2/04 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PARKS, FISH & WILDLIFE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6282 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Sheahan, Vice Chair; Doumit, Jacobsen, Morton, Spanel and Swecker.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: An annual or two-day shellfish and seaweed license is required for all persons over 15 years of age to take seaweed or shellfish, including crab. A surcharge is added to shellfish licenses to fund biotoxin testing by the Department of Health and research into harmful algal blooms. Any person fishing for Dungeness crab must record the crab catch on a catch record card. The record cards are issued at the time of license purchase, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife uses the contact information collected at the time of license purchase to later survey potential crab fishers.

A person choosing only to fish for razor clams must still provide all contact information at the time of license purchase, because the shellfish and seaweed license allows the person to fish for crab and be subject to catch reporting requirements.

Summary of Substitute Bill: An annual razor clam license or a three-day razor clam license allows a person to harvest razor clams only. Each license includes a surcharge to fund biotoxin programs. Only proof of residence must be provided to receive a razor clam license.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill adds a temporary, three-day razor clam license, and adds a biotoxin surcharge on each new license. The bill specifies that revenue from the annual razor clam license will be deposited in the general fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Issuing the shellfish and seaweed license is a paperwork nightmare. There are long lines in stores, and people wait for hours when the system isn't working right. The razor clam fishery is unique because of the time constraints on the fishery. There are infrequent, narrow windows authorized to dig clams, and thus people tend to buy licenses at the last minute.

Testimony Against: The Department of Health needs to ensure that the costs of biotoxin testing are covered.

Testified: Jennifer Tebaldi, WA Dept. of Health (concerns); Mellanie Rongey, Bob's Merchandise; Frank Hawley, Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (con); Jim Jesernig, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers (concerns); Tom Downer (pro); Ed Owens (pro).