

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6159

As Passed House:

March 1, 2006

Title: An act relating to recreational fishing for albacore tuna.

Brief Description: Concerning recreational fishing for albacore tuna.

Sponsors: By Senators Jacobsen, Oke and Spanel.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 2/16/06 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/1/06, 96-2.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires recreational fishers to obtain a license to fish for albacore tuna.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Buck, Ranking Minority Member; Kretz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Chandler, Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Hunt, Kagi and Orcutt.

Staff: Amy Van Horn (786-7168).

Background:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) manages wildlife and is responsible for authorizing the taking of wildlife. With the exception of a few fish species, the Department requires a license to fish recreationally, harvest shellfish, and take seaweed. Licenses are sold to persons 15 years or older for an annual fee. The fee is \$36 for residents, \$72 for non-residents, and \$5 for youth. Currently, a license is not required to fish recreationally for albacore tuna.

As a result of this exception, there are no catch limits or permission requirements on albacore tuna fishing in the state, which includes coastal waters out to 200 miles offshore. According to the Department, a voluntary logbook program revealed that recreational fishers caught more than 12,000 albacore tuna off the Washington coast in 2005, up from 8,000 in 2000.

In terms of federal and international regulation, albacore tuna is a highly migratory species (HMS) which is governed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council's HMS Management Plan, as well as several international fisheries treaties. According to the Department, in the future the HMS Management Plan may require recreational albacore tuna fishers to obtain federal fishing permits in states which do not require state licenses for it.

Summary of Bill:

A state personal-use fishing license is required to fish for albacore tuna.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Oregon and California require licenses to fish for albacore tuna. Washington is losing money, and it needs to keep track of these fish.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Oke, prime sponsor; and Ed Owens, Westport and Ilwaco Charter Boat Associations, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.