

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1850

*As Passed House
April 12, 1991*

Title: An act relating to hunting and fishing licenses.

Brief Description: Raising various hunting and fishing fees.

Sponsor(s): By House Committee on Revenue (originally sponsored by Representatives Wang and Holland; by request of Department of Wildlife and Office of Financial Management).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Revenue, March 10, 1991, DPS;
Passed House, April 12, 1991, 63-32.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
REVENUE**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1850 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 10 members: Representatives Wang, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Holland, Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Belcher; Day; Leonard; Morris; Phillips; and Rust.

Minority Report: *Do not pass.* Signed by 5 members:
Representatives Wynne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle; Morton; Silver; and Van Luven.

Staff: Rick Peterson (786-7150).

Background: Nearly half, 47.9 percent, of the Department of Wildlife's budget is funded by hunting and fishing license fees. Hunting and fishing license fees were most recently increased in 1985. Increases also occurred in 1982, 1976 and 1971.

The license sales have declined in the last 10 years. A number of factors explain this decline: increased population density, increased urbanization of the population, changing family structure and aging of the state's population. License sales will continue to decline in the future.

Summary of Bill: Hunting and fishing license fees are increased by approximately 25 percent. The most popular resident hunting and fishing licenses are increased as

follows: combined hunting and fishing from \$24.00 to \$30.00; hunting from \$12.00 to \$15.00; deer tag from \$15.00 to \$19.00; elk tag from \$20.00 to \$25.00; waterfowl stamp from \$5.00 to \$7.00; fishing from \$14.00 to \$18.00; and steelhead card from \$15.00 to \$19.00. See the bill for details on increases for nonresidents and other categories of fees.

Free fishing licenses for residents 70 years and older are eliminated and replaced with a \$3 fee. New fees are established for lynx tags, \$225 resident and \$375 nonresident.

License fees are to be adjusted annually by the Department of Wildlife for inflation. Changes in fees are to be rounded up to the nearest dollar. The Department of Wildlife is directed to study fees levels and recommend adjustments to the Legislature.

This bill is null and void unless both it and SHB 1250, the business tax on the manufacture, wholesale and retailing of outdoor recreational equipment, are referenced in the Omnibus Budget Bill.

Fiscal Note: Requested March 12, 1991.

Appropriation: None.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 1991.

Testimony For: The license fee increase is necessary to support the budget of the Department of Wildlife.

Testimony Against: The license fee increase is necessary to support the budget of the Department of Wildlife, however, additional funding sources should be found. Note: SHB 1250 raises money for the wildlife fund through a tax on outdoor recreational equipment. The fee increases in the original bill should be changed to an across the board increase. Note: the substitute bill does this. The hunters and fishers cannot be expected to pay the costs of nongame programs through license fee increases. The general fund should make a greater contribution to the support of these nongame programs. The money available to support the Department of Wildlife operating budget has been reduced through diverting interest earnings on the Wildlife Fund, creation of new capital projects and reduction of general fund contributions for habitat management. Many expressed a willingness to support license fee increases once these issues are addressed.

Witnesses: James L. Brummett, Sportsmen's Advocate (con); Jeff Parsons, National Audubon Society (pro); Charles Cheshire, Vancouver Wildlife League (pro); Ronald J. Holtcamp, Trout Unlimited Olympia (pro and con); Cliff Kuppinger, West Bass (con); Daniel Werner, Vancouver Wildlife; Ted Cowan, KC Outdoor Sports Council (con); Gene Knowles, Issaquah Sportsmen's Club (con); Bill Robinson, Trout Unlimited; Jim King, Washington State Sportsmens Council (con); Mark Graham, Washington State Bowhunters (pro); Jon Akers, Washington State Bowhunters; Rob Allen, Washington State Association of Bow Hunters (pro); John F. Rolle, Vancouver Wildlife (pro); Bill Jones, Wildcat Steelhead & HUB Sportsmens Club; Arnold Livingston, seniors; Jeff Parsons, National Audubon Society (all pro); and Curt Smitch, Washington Department of Wildlife (pro).