

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHJM 4008

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES,
MARCH 25, 1991**

Brief Description: Requesting Congress and the President to ban driftnets.

SPONSORS: Representatives R. King, Hochstatter, Cole, Orr, Haugen, Basich, Wilson, Spanel, Fuhrman, Padden, Winsley, D. Sommers, Bowman, Paris, May, Miller, Riley, Brough, Silver, Nealey, Forner, Wynne, Sheldon, Fraser, Phillips, Jones, Brumsickle, Nelson, Neher, Horn, Casada, H. Myers, Leonard, Moyer, Sprenkle, Brekke and Anderson.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Metcalf, Chairman; Oke, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Barr, Conner, Patterson, Snyder, and Sutherland.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Hearing Dates: March 25, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Driftnets are gillnet fishing gear which are allowed to drift with prevailing water currents. The use of driftnets in the high seas caught public attention in the mid-1980s. Issues of concern to the public included sensitivity of marine life to plastics, and the increased interception of Alaska salmon by foreign squid driftnet fleets in the North Pacific Ocean.

The 100th Congress passed the Driftnet Impact Monitoring, Assessment, and Control Act of 1987. The act directed the negotiation of cooperative driftnet monitoring, assessment, and enforcement agreements with foreign governments using driftnets in the North Pacific Ocean and required the Secretary of Commerce to evaluate several aspects of driftnet control technology. Additional concerns over driftnet fishing for albacore tuna in the South Pacific Ocean resulted in the adoption of the Wellington Convention agreement by 20 South Pacific nations, which bans driftnet fishing in the South Pacific Ocean by 1991. The 1989 United Nations General Assembly agreed to a non-binding resolution on high seas driftnetting. The resolution called for an immediate reduction of large-scale driftnet fishing in the South Pacific followed by a ban on driftnet fishing in the South Pacific by July 1, 1991, and worldwide prohibition one year later. Driftnet fleets in the South Pacific have been substantially reduced as a result of these actions. In 1989, the Province

of British Columbia, and the states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, and Hawaii jointly issued a proclamation to the federal governments of Canada and the United States proposing steps to reduce the impact of high seas driftnet squid fleets on salmonids, albacore, seabirds, and marine mammals.

SUMMARY:

The Legislature respectfully prays to the President and Congress to seek through all legal efforts in all available international forums an international ban on driftnet fishing on the high seas.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

The Legislature needs to keep pressure on Congress to act to ban driftnets which damage our fish and marine mammal resources.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Jeff Parsons; Chris Hedrick, Puget Sound Water Quality Authority; Jim King, Sportsmen's Council