

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESCR 8409

AS PASSED SENATE, JUNE 26, 1991

Brief Description: Creating a joint select committee on the department of wildlife.

SPONSORS: Senators Metcalf and Owen.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Hearing Dates: June 19, 1991

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Wildlife has proposed a fee increase to cover cost of living increases since the last adjustment in 1985. The department has undergone reorganization based on the 1987 act which changed the structure of the department.

SUMMARY:

The Legislature recognizes that additional funding is needed for both habitat and nongame management. The Department of Wildlife's present funding base is inadequate to satisfy all consumptive and nonconsumptive users. The Legislature recognizes that there is a need to broaden the department's funding base to allow enhanced hunting and fishing seasons, adequate enforcement, and habitat protection.

A Joint Select Committee on the Department of Wildlife is established. The committee will examine the sources of funding of the department and how the funds from each source are used. It will review how the funds are separated into traditional game-related programs such as hunting and fishing, and those programs which are related to the benefit of the general public. The committee will review the funding for information and education programs. An evaluation will include a discussion of the organization and the structure of the department and an evaluation of how public input is used by the department to shape policies and procedures. An evaluation shall be made to assess the feasibility of combining the Department of Wildlife and Department of Fisheries. The committee will review how research and surveys are conducted by the department and whether they are adequate for sound wildlife management.

The Joint Select Committee will consist of 12 members: four members from the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, two from each caucus to be selected by the President of the Senate; four members from the House of Representatives Fisheries and Wildlife Committee, two from each of the political caucuses to be selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; two members from the Senate Ways and Means Committee, one from each of the caucuses selected by the President of the Senate; and two from the House of Representatives Revenue Committee or Capital Facilities and Finance Committee, one from each of the two caucuses selected by the Speaker of the House.

The Joint Select Committee will use legislative staff and facilities but may hire additional staff with specific technical expertise to carry out the mandates of the resolution. All expenses of the committee will be paid jointly by the Senate and House of Representatives. Expenses and hiring of additional staff will be subject to approval of the Senate Facilities and Operations Committee and the House of Representatives Executive Rules Committee.

The Joint Select Committee will report its findings to the Legislature by December 1, 1992 and will terminate on July 1, 1993.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR: None

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: No one