

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5980

AS PASSED SENATE, MAY 5, 1993

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to fishing licenses.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Owen, Spanel and Rinehart; by request of Office of Financial Management)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5980 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Spanel, Vice Chairman; Gaspard, Hargrove, Jesernig, Niemi, Owen, Pelz, Quigley, Snyder, Sutherland, Talmadge, and Wojahn.

Staff: Mike Groesch (786-7715)

Hearing Dates: April 13, 1993; April 14, 1993

BACKGROUND:

Revenues from commercial and recreational food fish license fees and landing taxes are deposited into the general fund. Current revenue from these sources is approximately \$13 million per biennium and is equal to 26 percent of the general fund expenditures by the Department of Fisheries.

Recreational fees are derived from resident and nonresident licenses for personal use, salmon, sturgeon, Hood Canal shrimp, and razor clam harvest. Two-day licenses are also available for personal use, salmon and sturgeon fishing. Licenses are not required for individuals under 15 years of age or over 70 years. There is also a \$1 surcharge on salmon license fees to support the Washington Regional Enhancement Groups Fund.

In 1991, revenues from recreational licenses provided \$2.9 million to the general fund. Fees from 6,158 resident and nonresident commercial licenses amounted to \$1.6 million in 1991. In the same year landing taxes accounted for an additional \$2.1 million.

SUMMARY:

Recreational fishing licenses are consolidated into resident and nonresident personal use and shellfish licenses. Two-day licenses are also available. Fees are standardized and increased to \$7 for annual personal use licenses.

A personal use shellfish license is created. The annual license fee is \$5 and the license is required for the recreational harvest of shellfish and seaweed.

Commercial landing tax rates are increased by 5 percent.

A surcharge of \$75 is added to all commercial licenses. An ad valorem tax is added to the renewal fee for transfer of limited entry licenses. Delivery permits and license transfer fees are increased. Sea urchin and sea cucumber license fees are increased.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

Increased support of the department is necessary in order to meet the growing concerns regarding endangered species. The fees will allow the department to continue operations in the face of the other budgetary restrictions.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

The landing tax is a burdensome, inequitable means of raising revenue. The bill will place Washington commercial fishers at a disadvantage on the international market.

TESTIFIED: Jeff Parsons, Audubon Society (pro); Donald Stuart, Salmon for Washington (con); Ray Shindler, Rob Zuanich, Purse Seine Vessel Owners Association (con); Ed Owens, Coalition of Washington Ocean Fishermen (con); Ed Manary, Department of Fisheries (con); Randy Ray, Pacific Seafood Processors Association (con); Greg Bloo, Northwest Fisheries Association (con); Bill Taylor, Pacific Coast Oyster Growers Association (con)