
HOUSE BILL 2840

State of Washington

53rd Legislature

1994 Regular Session

By Representatives Orr, G. Cole and King

Read first time 01/26/94. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources & Parks.

1 AN ACT Relating to wildlife and fisheries habitat on state
2 rangelands; adding a new section to chapter 89.08 RCW; adding a new
3 section to chapter 79.01 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 77.12
4 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.51 RCW; creating new sections;
5 and making an appropriation.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the restoration
8 and maintenance of Washington's rangelands and shrub-steppe habitat is
9 vital to the long-term benefit of the people of the state, and that the
10 state lacks a consistent policy toward management of state rangelands
11 and wildlife, fish, and water quality protection on these lands.
12 Livestock and wildlife are the primary users of rangelands and are
13 important resources in Washington's economy. Livestock grazing is
14 managed inconsistently by the state agencies that lease rangelands for
15 this purpose. The inconsistencies exist in grazing fee structure,
16 management philosophy, management intensity, and stewardship of other
17 public resources such as water, native vegetation, wildlife, and
18 fisheries. The legislature finds that the state agencies do not charge
19 private landowners sufficient fees for grazing leases to cover the full

1 cost of administering the leases, conducting capital improvements, and
2 avoiding or mitigating damages to public resources. The legislature
3 declares that wildlife, fish, and water quality protection, rangeland
4 preservation and sustainability, proper grazing management, and
5 adequate lease fees must be implemented consistently on state lands,
6 and that a state policy be developed to accomplish these goals.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 89.08 RCW
8 to read as follows:

9 The public grazing policy committee is established. The committee
10 shall consist of eleven members. Eight members shall be appointed by
11 the chairperson of the Washington conservation commission, who shall
12 also function as the chairperson of the committee. The appointees
13 shall represent the following agencies and interests:

- 14 (1) Washington State University cooperative extension service;
- 15 (2) The department of fish and wildlife;
- 16 (3) The department of natural resources;
- 17 (4) The Washington rangelands committee;
- 18 (5) The department of ecology;
- 19 (6) A livestock growers' organization;
- 20 (7) An environmental group; and
- 21 (8) An outdoor recreation interest.

22 The chairpersons of the house of representatives committee on
23 fisheries and wildlife and the senate committee on environment and
24 natural resources shall also serve on the public grazing policy
25 committee.

26 Members of the committee shall receive no additional compensation
27 for their services except that travel expenses shall be allowed in
28 accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The public grazing policy committee
30 established in section 2 of this act shall develop recommendations and
31 a rationale for each to the appropriate committees of the legislature
32 on the following policy issues by December 31, 1994:

- 33 (1) The grazing fee per animal unit month that will recover direct
34 and indirect costs of grazing on state lands managed by the departments
35 of natural resources and wildlife including lost fish and wildlife
36 habitat and reduced water quality;

1 (2) How to control livestock in open range counties from
2 interfering with state management objectives or coordinated objectives
3 developed through the coordinated resource management planning process;

4 (3) The capital investments needed on state rangelands to maximize
5 long-term range productivity and long-term preservation of fish and
6 wildlife habitat and water quality;

7 (4) An appropriate level of state agency funding for management of
8 and research on state rangelands;

9 (5) An appropriate level of state agency staffing for adequate
10 implementation of coordinated resource management planning;

11 (6) Whether grazing leases issued by the state should continue to
12 be categorically exempted from the environmental review process under
13 the state environmental policy act;

14 (7) How best to coordinate and integrate state, federal, and tribal
15 agency public rangeland ecosystem management policies.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 79.01 RCW
17 to read as follows:

18 The department shall implement a range inventory and monitoring
19 program for application to all department-managed rangelands. The
20 inventory shall be designed to produce reliable estimates of forage
21 production, livestock carrying capacity, and residue remaining after
22 grazing. The program shall use this information to adjust the number
23 of animal unit months, grazing system, and timing to maintain or
24 improve range condition.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 77.12 RCW
26 to read as follows:

27 The department shall implement a range inventory and monitoring
28 program for application to all department-managed rangelands. The
29 inventory shall be designed to produce reliable estimates of forage
30 production, livestock carrying capacity, and residue remaining after
31 grazing. The program shall use this information to adjust the number
32 of animal unit months, grazing system, and timing to maintain or
33 improve range condition.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 43.51 RCW
35 to read as follows:

1 The commission shall implement a range inventory and monitoring
2 program for application to all commission-managed rangelands. The
3 inventory shall be designed to produce reliable estimates of forage
4 production, livestock carrying capacity, and residue remaining after
5 grazing. The program shall use this information to adjust the number
6 of animal unit months, grazing system, and timing to maintain or
7 improve range condition.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** By October 31, 1994, the legislative budget
9 committee shall report to the appropriate legislative committees on the
10 livestock grazing programs in the state department of fish and
11 wildlife, natural resources, and the state parks and recreation
12 commission. The report shall address the following:

13 (1) Costs and benefits of the programs, including indirect costs
14 and benefits to public resources such as fish, wildlife, native
15 vegetation, and water;

16 (2) Adequacy of data and other information used by each agency to
17 develop lease specifications such as number of animal unit months and
18 timing of grazing;

19 (3) Whether each agency adequately determines the impact of
20 livestock grazing to public resources such as water, wildlife, and
21 fisheries;

22 (4) Whether public resource protection standards are conditions of
23 grazing leases;

24 (5) Whether conditions are complied with by the lessee and
25 frequency of compliance; and

26 (6) Whether lessees are monitored for compliance.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** The sum of ten thousand dollars, or as much
28 thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the biennium ending
29 June 30, 1995, from the general fund to the conservation commission to
30 implement sections 2 and 3 of this act.

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