

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1282

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to certain animals posing a danger to livestock or crops.

Brief Description: Authorizing landowners to kill coyotes and Columbian ground squirrels.

Sponsors: Representatives Fuhrman, Mastin, Buck, Goldsmith, Koster, Padden, Mulliken, Lambert, Crouse, Thompson, Basich, Hargrove, Sheldon, McMahan, Pelesky, Sheahan, Boldt and Elliot.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/8/95, 2/10/95 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/7/95, 79-17.

Senate Amended.

House Concurred.

Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Chairman; Buck, Vice Chairman; Pennington, Vice Chairman; Basich, Ranking Minority Member; Beeksma; Cairnes; Elliot; G. Fisher; Sheldon; Stevens; B. Thomas and Thompson.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Regala, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen and Romero.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: In Washington, a person must have a hunting license in order to hunt for wild animals.

Under current law, the owner or tenant of real property may trap or kill on that property wild animals or wild birds, other than endangered species, that are damaging crops, domestic animals, fowl, or other property. Wildlife trapped or killed under this provision remains the property of the state, and the person trapping or killing the

wildlife is to notify the Department of Fish and Wildlife immediately. The department is to dispose of the wildlife within three working days of the notification.

Summary of Bill: Current law is amended also to allow an immediate family member or an employee of the property owner to trap or kill wild animals or wild birds, other than endangered species, that are damaging crops, domestic animals, fowl, or other property. The property owner, family member, employee, or tenant killing or trapping wild animals or wild birds under this provision is not required to have a hunting license. Coyotes and Columbian ground squirrels trapped or killed under this provision do not remain the property of the state and will not be disposed of by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: You should not have to have a hunting license to get rid of these animals. Coyotes will never be endangered. They have learned to adapt to many different environments. Predator control is no longer adequately funded in Washington. Coyotes do millions of dollars of damage to the cattle industry. This will help ranchers get control of a problem. A rancher has been cited for not having a license because the coyote was not in the actual act of killing the animals.

Testimony Against: There is an issue here of enforcement. We don't want to increase the opportunity for people to hunt illegally. A second issue of concern is hunter safety. Currently people have to attend the hunter education course to get their hunting license, and these people would not have the course because they would not have a license.

Testified: K.O. Rosenberg, Northeast Tri-Counties; Kent Lebsack, Washington Cattlemen's Association (both in favor); and Ed Manary, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.