

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5347

As Reported By House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to increasing fishing opportunities for juveniles.

Brief Description: Creating a program for juvenile fishing only waters.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Oke, Winsley, Snyder, Bauer, Swecker, Morton, Schow, Zarelli, Rossi, Strannigan and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/20/98, 2/27/98 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Buck, Chairman; Sump, Vice Chairman; Thompson, Vice Chairman; Regala, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander; Anderson; Chandler; Hatfield and Pennington.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Butler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Eickmeyer.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: Currently the Department of Fish and Wildlife designates certain waters for juvenile fishing only. By rule, the department has defined "juvenile" to be a person under 15 years old.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Fish and Wildlife Commission must institute a program to identify, establish, and expand fishing opportunities for young anglers. In instituting this program, the Department of Fish and Wildlife must direct the program at young anglers less than 18 years old, must strive to provide fishing opportunities that encourage participation year around, must strive to provide fishing opportunities easily accessible from urban areas to encourage participation from inner-city youth, and must emphasize catch and retention opportunities. The department may establish specific areas throughout the state where only young anglers are allowed to fish and areas where an adult is allowed to fish only when accompanied by a young angler. The department may

use fish produced in private and public hatcheries to provide viable fishing opportunities for young anglers.

The department must work with cooperative groups, regional fisheries enhancement groups, government agencies, Indian tribes, private fish farmers, and civic groups for the purpose of expanding fishing opportunities for young anglers throughout the state. Organized groups that sponsor group outings for young fishers must be encouraged to the fullest extent.

The department must report to the Legislature on its progress with this effort by January 31, 1999.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill: The underlying bill focused on a program for juvenile fishing only. The amended bill directs the commission more broadly to increase fishing opportunities for young anglers, including designation of juvenile fishing-only waters as well as other options.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This will encourage young people to get involved in fishing. It is good for kids and good for families. This will also help the fishing industry in the future. There are programs that teach children how to fish and provide them with equipment, but there must be designated waters close enough that they can use the new skill. This is a positive move for youth in the state.

Testimony Against: The language in the current bill is prescriptive. The department would like the language to be more flexible to allow successes in this program to go beyond the designation of more juvenile fishing-only waters.

Testified: Senator Pam Roach, prime sponsor; Laurie Glass Goerg, Rod and Reels; and Sandi Snell and Brian Edie, Department of Fish and Wildlife (all in favor).