

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5642

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**As Reported By House Committee On:**  
Natural Resources

**Title:** An act relating to limiting the number of fishers eligible to commercially fish for Puget Sound Dungeness crab.

**Brief Description:** Regulating the taking of Dungeness crab in Puget Sound.

**Sponsors:** Senators Spanel and Oke.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Natural Resources: 3/28/97, 4/3/97 [DP].

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Buck, Chairman; Sump, Vice Chairman; Thompson, Vice Chairman; Regala, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander; Anderson; Chandler; Hatfield; Pennington and Sheldon.

**Staff:** Rick Anderson (786-7114).

**Background:** The Puget Sound Dungeness crab fishery is subject to limited entry requirements. In 1996, there were 236 resident licenses and 13 non-resident licenses issued by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The director of the department is authorized to issue new Puget Sound crab licenses as necessary to maintain a total of 200 licenses.

Federal funds are available on a match basis for buy-back of vessels to reduce fishing pressure. The recently reauthorized Magnuson Fisheries Conservation and Management Act includes a provision that establishes priority for federal buy-back dollars to fisheries that avoid overcapitalization.

**Summary of Bill:** The director may issue new Puget Sound Dungeness crab licenses only as necessary to maintain a total of 125 licenses.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** The bill is necessary to receive federal buy-back dollars for the Puget Sound crab fishery. The Director of Fish and Wildlife is working with the Secretary of Commerce to secure buy-back funds for this fishery. Limiting the potential for overcapitalization of this fishery will help to secure federal funding.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Harriet Spanel, prime sponsor; Ed Owens, Intersound Crab Association; and Brian Edie, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (pro).