

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1524

As Reported By House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Finance

Title: An act relating to commercial salmon fishery licenses.

Brief Description: Allowing commercial salmon fishers to forego an annual season at a reduced fee.

Sponsors: Representatives Alexander, Linville, Kessler, DeBolt, Buck, Hatfield, Doumit, Costa, Anderson, Pennington, Constantine, Blalock, Gardner, Sullivan, Lantz and Morris.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/14/97, 2/19/97 [DPS];

Finance: 3/3/97, 3/7/97 [DPS(NR)].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Buck, Chairman; Sump, Vice Chairman; Thompson, Vice Chairman; Regala, Ranking Minority Member; Butler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander; Chandler; Hatfield; Pennington and Sheldon.

Staff: Rick Anderson (786-7114).

Background: Licenses for salmon charter boats and commercial salmon fisheries are subject to limited entry requirements. The Department of Fish and Wildlife no longer issues licenses for these fisheries. To renew a salmon charter boat or a commercial salmon fishery license, a person must have held the license the previous year or have acquired the license from a person who held it the previous year.

A fee for permit renewal is charged for charter boat and commercial salmon fishery licenses. The permit renewal fee for residents is \$380 for each license except for the salmon purse seine license which is \$530. Each license is also subject to an annual \$100 surcharge. The surcharge is dedicated to regional fisheries enhancement groups.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A person can renew a salmon charter boat license or a commercial salmon fishery license with the payment of the \$100 surcharge and a \$15 handling fee if the department is notified that the person seeking the license renewal will not participate in the commercial fishery during that year. Persons renewing a salmon charter boat or salmon troll license must notify the department by May 1. Persons renewing a gill net, reef net or purse seine license must notify the department by August 1.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill changes the notification date of the net fisheries from May 1 to August 1.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill will help reduce harvest pressure on dwindling salmon stocks. Many people who hold these licenses only fish occasionally. Commercial salmon fisheries need the flexibility to make business decisions. Fishing, as a business decision, doesn't make sense if there aren't enough fish. If too many people take advantage of this bill, it may raise a policy question as to whether or not these people should continue to receive a license.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Richard Good, Washington Trollers Association; Doug Fricke, Washington Trollers Association; Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries; Scott Coughlin, Purse Seine Vessel Owner's Association (all pro); and Bruce Crawford, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (support with concerns).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Natural Resources be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives B. Thomas, Chairman; Carrell, Vice Chairman; Mulliken, Vice Chairman; Dunshee, Ranking Minority Member; Dickerson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boldt; Butler; Conway; Kastama; Mason; Morris; Pennington and Schoesler.

Staff: Linda Brooks (786-7153).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Finance Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Natural Resources: No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Current law allows the Department of Fish and Wildlife to refund commercial fishing license fees if the department cancels the season for an entire fishing fleet. This bill will make it possible for decisions about fishing to be made on an individual, rather than fleet-wide, basis. With poor salmon runs forecasted for some areas, the state benefits if some commercial fishers voluntarily opt to forego a season. Fewer persons fishing reduces the pressure on the resource.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (Pro) Brian Edie, Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Scott Coughlin, Purse Seine Vessel Owner's Association.