

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1770

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, April 3, 1997

Title: An act relating to the Dungeness crab coastal fishery.

Brief Description: Setting the fee for the transfer of Dungeness crab--coastal fishery licenses.

Sponsors: House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Alexander, Linville, Hatfield, Anderson, Doumit, Buck, Chandler and Kessler).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 4/3/97 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Jacobsen, Morton, Prentice, Snyder, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

Background: The Legislature created limited entry coastal crab fishing licenses that became effective on January 1, 1995. Two types of licenses were created: a coastal crab license, and coastal crab class B license. Both licenses are subject to a fee and must be renewed annually. The class B license is a temporary license that expires on December 31, 1999. This license is awarded to crab fishers that had some historical participation in the coast crab fishery, but not enough to qualify for the ongoing coastal crab license.

The base fee for renewing a coastal crab fishing license is \$295 if the license holder is a state resident. This license is transferable, but transfer is subject to a fee of \$1,032.50 if transferred to a state resident and \$1,275.50 if transferred to a non-resident. In addition, a transfer of this license is subject to a 20 percent surcharge.

The coastal crab account was created in 1994. The account originally received revenue from three sources: the 20 percent surcharge on the transfer of coastal crab licenses, a temporary surcharge of \$250 on the license renewal of either of the two types of coastal crab licenses, and a \$250 fee for a delivery license. The delivery license is required of fishers who catch crab in state offshore waters, do not possess one of the two coastal crab licenses, and who deliver crab into the state. The temporary \$250 license surcharge was in effect only for licenses renewed in 1995 and 1996. The 1994 legislation specified that funds from the coastal crab account must be used to buy back class B coastal crab licenses during the 1995 and 1996 fishing seasons and to pay for the department's crab management activities. Management activities are defined as studies, negotiations, enhancement projects, and other activities determined by the department as necessary to manage the state's crab resources.

Most of the crabs caught in coastal waters are usually found in off-shore waters outside of the three-mile line of state jurisdiction. State law provides that a person with a valid Oregon or California crab license can deliver crab caught in off-shore waters from February 15 to September 15. State law also allows the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to make case-by-case decisions allowing crab fishers from Oregon and California to deliver crab into the state from December 1 to February 15 if a number of conditions exist.

Summary of Amended Bill: A \$500 transfer fee is established. A license transferred to a nonresident is subject to an additional transfer fee equal to the difference between a resident and nonresident license renewal fee. A license renewal surcharge of \$120 is assessed on both types of coastal crab licenses. Crab license transfer fees and surcharges are deposited into the coastal crab account. The 20 percent surcharge on license transfer is deleted. Persons with a Oregon or California crab may not deliver crab into the state from February 15 to September 15. Dated language relating to the 1995 and 1996 class B license buyout is deleted.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: A technical change is made to add the word license– in a section where it was inadvertently omitted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The department and the crab fishers have worked together to produce the bill and no one opposes it. The legislation is necessary to correctly fund the coastal crab account.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Ed Owens Columbia River Crab Fishermen, WA Dungeness Crab Fisherman, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries (pro); Brian Edie, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (pro).