

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2967

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Natural Resources & Parks, February 26, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to feeding wildlife during emergency conditions.

**Brief Description:** Providing for feeding wildlife during emergency conditions.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Clements, Buck, Regala, Huff and Alexander).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources & Parks: 2/26/98 [DP-WM]

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Jacobsen, Morton, Prentice, Roach, Snyder, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

**Staff:** Vic Moon (786-7469)

**Background:** Current law directs the Department of Fish and Wildlife to work closely with landowners suffering game damage problems to control damage without killing the animals when practical. As a matter of practice during winter conditions, the department has established feeding stations for deer and elk in areas of limited winter range and where habitat has been depleted because of forest or wildland fires. For fiscal year 1997, the Legislature provided an appropriation of \$1.4 million from the state general fund for the emergency feeding of deer and elk.

A person who wishes to hunt deer or elk in Washington must buy either a hunting license or a combination hunting and fishing license and then a deer tag or an elk tag. The fees for these licenses and tags are set in statute. For the period 1987 to 1996, annual department sales of combination licenses and hunting licenses have averaged approximately 97,000 and 170,000 respectively. For the same period, the department sold on average 191,000 deer tags and just under 88,000 elk tags annually. License and tag sales vary from year to year.

**Summary of Bill:** The Legislature recognizes that wintering wildlife should exist under natural conditions supported by suitable habitat. The Legislature also recognizes, however, that it is in the public interest to feed wildlife on an emergency basis beyond the Department of Fish and Wildlife's regular winter feeding operations. The Legislature further recognizes that hunters and others may be willing to make voluntary contributions to support emergency winter feeding operations.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife must initiate an effort to solicit voluntary contributions to fund emergency winter feeding efforts. The department must provide an opportunity for

the purchasers of hunting licenses, combination hunting and fishing licenses, deer tags, and elk tags to contribute voluntarily to this effort. The department may also solicit other donations to support emergency wildlife feeding. Funds received by the department as contributions for emergency winter feeding are to be deposited in the wildlife fund and may only be used for emergency winter feeding operations and associated costs.

The holders of hunting licenses, combination hunting and fishing licenses, deer tags, and elk tags may contribute one additional dollar per license or tag to be dedicated to emergency winter feeding. Beginning July 1, 2000, the department may charge one additional dollar for each deer and elk tag. Funds received through these charges must be used only for emergency winter feeding operations and associated costs.

When the department determines that seasonal conditions will likely require emergency winter feeding operations, the department will provide to the Legislature information on the extent of the emergency, an estimate of the total funds necessary to address the emergency, and information on the total funds raised by the department for emergency winter feeding.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 2, 1998.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed except Section 5, which takes effect July 1, 2000.

**Testimony For:** None.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** No one.