

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6117

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, January 27, 1998
Ways & Means, February 9, 1998

Title: An act relating to repurchasing commercial salmon fishing licenses.

Brief Description: Creating a salmon license buyback program.

Sponsors: Senators Morton, Snyder, Swecker, Stevens, Rossi and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 1/20/98, 1/27/98 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/9/98 [DPS].

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: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6117 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Bauer, Brown, Fraser, Hochstatter, Kohl, Long, Loveland, McDonald, Roach, Rossi, Schow, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Zarelli.

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

Background: Commercial salmon fishing and salmon charter boat fishing are facing serious reductions in fishing opportunities due to declining salmon stocks. This situation will result in economic hardship to commercial salmon fishers and charter boat operators. Current programs for license buyback and permanent license retirement are funded by federal sources and have gradually reduced the number of active licenses.

The threatened and endangered nature of salmon stocks necessitates a more aggressive commercial and charter boat buyout program.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Resident commercial salmon fishing licenses and resident salmon charter boat licensees may participate in an expanded license buyout program which

is funded at the 25 percent rate from state funds and the 75 percent rate from federal sources.

The buyout program purchases licenses only and does not cover boats or fishing gear. Once purchased, the licenses are permanently retired from the fishery.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The appropriation of \$19 million state general fund to the Department of Fish and Wildlife is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Commercial salmon fishing is an industry that has suffered an extreme cutback in profitability; many fishers desire to leave the fishery and sell their commercial licenses back to the state.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Mark Cedergreen, Westport Charter Boat Association; Robert Kehoe, Purse Seine Vessel Owners Association; Allan Hollingsworth, Grays Harbor Gilnetters; Brian Edie, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Dick Ducharme, Yakima Growers and Shippers Association.