

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1755

As Reported By House Committee On:

Natural Resources
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to fish and wildlife equipment.

Brief Description: Creating the fish and wildlife equipment fund.

Sponsors: Representatives Buck, Regala, Clements, Doumit and Haigh; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/17/99, 2/24/99 [DPS];
Appropriations: 3/4/99, 3/6/99 [DPS(NR)].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the fish and wildlife equipment fund for use by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Buck, Republican Co-Chair; Regala, Democratic Co-Chair; Anderson, Democratic Vice Chair; Sump, Republican Vice Chair; G. Chandler; Clements; Doumit; Eickmeyer; Ericksen; Pennington; Rockefeller and Stensen.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

A number of different revolving funds exist in state government and local government to accomplish certain tasks. These funds may be appropriated or non-appropriated. For example, the Department of Natural Resources is authorized to expend moneys without appropriation from the natural resources equipment fund for the purchase of equipment,

machinery, and supplies for the department, and for the repair and maintenance of equipment, machinery and supplies. All expenditures from the fund must be reimbursed by the department. All equipment, machinery, and supplies of the department are deemed to have been purchased by the natural resources equipment fund for reimbursement purposes.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife does not have similar authority to utilize a non-appropriated revolving fund for equipment.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The fish and wildlife equipment fund is created in the custody of the State Treasurer as a non-appropriated revolving fund for use by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Expenditures from the fish and wildlife equipment fund may be made for salaries, wages, and operations required for purchasing, repairing, replacing, and operating equipment used for the purposes authorized. The equipment may be used for administration, maintenance, and construction of fish and wildlife lands and facilities, administration and maintenance of lands under department control; administration, maintenance, and construction of projects that will enhance fish and wildlife; and administration, biological assessment, and enforcement necessary to carry out the fish and wildlife laws. Projects that will enhance fish and wildlife include volunteer cooperative projects, Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group (RFEG) projects, and salmon recovery projects. The department may purchase and sell equipment, materials, and supplies through the fund.

All existing and after-acquired equipment of the Department of Fish and Wildlife is deemed to have been purchased from the fish and wildlife equipment fund. Equipment purchased with general fund appropriations may be transferred into the fish and wildlife equipment fund with or without charging the fish and wildlife equipment fund.

Equipment may be rented to any federal, state, county, city, or governmental agency, volunteer cooperatives, RFEGs, and entities engaged in salmon recovery. The fish and wildlife equipment fund must be credited with a reasonable rental for the equipment. The terms and charges for the rentals are solely within the discretion of the department.

RFEGs may keep equipment and materials purchased for less than \$5,000 from an RFEG account without a charge-back to the fish and wildlife equipment fund. The department and the RFEG Advisory Board must develop guidelines regarding these purchases.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The authority for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to provide operators of equipment is deleted. Language is added to clarify that the department may purchase and sell equipment, materials, and supplies from the

fund. RFEGs may keep equipment and materials purchased for less than \$5,000 from an RFEG account without a charge-back being made to the fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: (Original bill) This is one of the recommendations contained in a recent management report concerning the Department of Fish and Wildlife. This is modeled after equipment funds used by the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Transportation. This will help modernize operations of the department and produce some cost savings.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Jim Buck, prime sponsor; and Lembit Ratassepp, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Natural Resources be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 31 members: Representatives Huff, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Alexander, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; D. Schmidt, Republican Vice Chair; Barlean; Benson; Boldt; Carlson; Clements; Cody; Crouse; Gombosky; Grant; Kagi; Keiser; Kenney; Lambert; Linville; Lisk; Mastin; McIntire; McMorris; Mulliken; Parlette; Regala; Rockefeller; Ruderman; Sullivan; Tokuda and Wensman.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

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

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: An independent study of the business practices at the Department of Fish and Wildlife recommended that the department establish an equipment fund. By charging user fees, the revolving fund could be used to replace equipment when it expired. The fund would be supported by a business plan.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Lembit Ratassepp, Department of Fish and Wildlife.