

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SHB 1716

C 235 L 99

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Authorizing funding for the warm water fish culture project at Ringold.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Natural Resources (Originally sponsored by Representatives G. Chandler, Doumit, Mastin, Mulliken and Grant).

House Committee on Natural Resources

House Committee on Appropriations

Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

Warm water game fish in Washington include the sunfish, pike, catfish, and perch families. A 1986 survey concluded that more than half of Washington fishing license holders fished for warm water species. The amount of recreation provided by warm water species in 1986 was second only to trout fishing in lowland lakes, and ahead of steelhead and salmon angling.

The warm water game fish enhancement program was created in 1996 within the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The program was originally funded through a \$5 license surcharge that was required to fish for bass, walleye, channel catfish, tiger musky and crappie. This revenue was to be used exclusively to increase opportunities for warm water game fishing and not to be used to replace funding for these programs. In 1998, the Legislature revised the Department of Fish and Wildlife licensing structure, eliminating all surcharges.

Funds equal to 6.512 percent of the total funds received from the sale of freshwater licenses and freshwater, saltwater, and shellfish combination licenses are deposited into the warm water game fish account. This percentage is adjusted annually to reflect the actual number of warm water game fish license holders, which is determined by survey.

State law requires that money from the warm water game fish account not be used for the operation or construction of the warm water fish culture project at Ringold. In addition, the statute requires that funds from the sale of the warm water game fish surcharges are to be deposited into the warm water game fish account.

Summary:

The name of the Ringold warm water facility is changed to the Rod Meseberg warm water fish production facility. An amount from the warm water game fish account not to exceed \$91,000 may be used for warm water fish culture at the Rod Meseberg warm water fish production facility, for the current biennium. This provision is null and void unless funding is provided in the budget. Language requiring that funds from the sale of the warm water game fish surcharges be deposited into the warm water game fish account is removed.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife must deposit \$1,250,000 into the warm water game fish account, as opposed to an amount equivalent to 6.512 percent of the funds received from the sale of each freshwater license and each freshwater, saltwater, and shellfish combination license. The department must deposit an additional amount which is adjusted on an annual basis according to a yearly survey of fishers. The department must conduct an initial survey in April 1999 as opposed to April 2000.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 95 0
Senate 47 0 (Senate amended)
House 96 0 (House concurred)

Effective: May 10, 1999