

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1716

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation, March 31, 1999
Ways & Means, April 5, 1999

Title: An act relating to warm water fish culture.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to warm water fish culture.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives G. Chandler, Doumit, Mastin, Mulliken and Grant).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 3/31/99 [DPA-WM]
Ways & Means: 4/5/99 [DPA (NRPR)].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Morton, Oke, Rossi, Snyder, Spanel and Stevens.

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Honeyford, Kline, Long, McDonald, Rasmussen, Rossi, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, West, Winsley, and Zarelli.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

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 freshwater 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 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The program was originally funded through a \$5 license surcharge that is required to fish for bass, walleye, channel catfish, tiger musky, and crappie. This revenue was to be used exclusively to increase opportunities to fish for warm

water game fish 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.

Currently, funds equal to 6.512 percent of the total funds received from the sale of freshwater 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.

Current statute 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 of Amended Bill: 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 is allowed to be used for warm water fish culture at the Rod Meseberg warm water fish production facility, for the current biennium. Language requiring that funds from the sale of the warm water game fish surcharges be deposited into the warm water game fish account is stricken, in order to be consistent with licensing format changes made in the 1998 session.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife must deposit \$1,250,000 into the warm water game fish account, as opposed to a number 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 is required to conduct an initial survey in April 1999 as opposed to April 2000.

A null and void clause applies to the \$91,000 for the Rod Meseberg Hatchery only. An emergency clause is also provided.

Amended Bill Compared to Second Substitute Bill: The null and void clause applies only to funding for the Rod Meseberg Hatchery.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 1, 1999.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): The warm water program in the Department of Fish and Wildlife is in a time of transition with regards to funding. The change in the freshwater fishing license format this year resulted in the elimination of the warm water stamp and the need to prorate a percentage of overall fishing license revenue into the warm water program. These funding provisions will keep the program stable until up-to-date surveys can be conducted to assure the correct share for continued warm-water funding needs.

Testimony Against (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): None.

Testified (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): PRO: Ron Sawyer, Grant County Fish Advisory; Brian Edie, Robert Gibbons, WDFW.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): The percentage used to calculate the license revenues to be deposited in the warm water game fish account was incorrect. This bill will provide stability for the warm water game fish program.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Testified (Ways & Means): Brian Edie, Department of Fish and Wildlife.