

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5120

As of January 15, 1999

Title: An act relating to methods of taking cougar and black bear.

Brief Description: Allowing for the hunting of black bears with bait and dogs, and the hunting of cougars with dogs.

Sponsors: Senator Hargrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

Background: Hunting cougar, black bear, bobcat, and lynx with the aid of dogs was prohibited by Initiative 655, which went into effect in December 1996. The practice of baiting bears to attract them to hunters was also prohibited by Initiative 655.

Since passage of the initiative, the populations of black bear and cougar have increased. Some of the animals migrate to areas where they have a high probability of contacting humans or domestic livestock. Human encounters with bear and cougar are becoming more common.

Authorizing hunting with dogs or bait will increase the harvest of black bears, while cougar are most efficiently hunted with the aid of dogs.

Summary of Bill: Initiative 655 is repealed. Pursuit only seasons are authorized for black bear provided that any bear pursued or treed is not killed or injured.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission may establish hunting seasons for black bear using dogs or bait, and may authorize cougar hunting with the aid of dogs. Procedures are established for the lawful means of baiting bears. The commission may prohibit bear baiting or hunting with dogs in grizzly bear recovery zones.

A hound permit is required for all hunters if a dog or dogs are used to hunt cougar.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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