

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1019

As Reported by House Committee On:
Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to the fish and wildlife commission.

Brief Description: Modifying the composition of the fish and wildlife commission.

Sponsors: Representatives Pennington, Hatfield, Mielke and Ogden.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 1/29/01, 2/19/01 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires each of the six administrative regions designated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife to have at least one resident serve on the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Doumit, Democratic Co-Chair; Sump, Republican Co-Chair; Pearson, Republican Vice Chair; Rockefeller, Democratic Vice Chair; G. Chandler, Edwards, Eickmeyer, Ericksen, Jackley, Murray and Pennington.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (the commission) consists of nine members serving six-year terms. Members are appointed by the Governor, and confirmed by the Senate. Three members must reside east of the summit of the Cascade mountains, three must reside west of the summit, and the remaining three are at large, and may reside anywhere in the state. Currently, the commission has four members from western Washington, and five members from eastern Washington. The nine members are residents of the following cities: Olympia, Bellingham, Wenatchee, Bainbridge Island, Pullman, Spokane, Selah, Seattle, and Kettle Falls.

The commission serves as the supervising authority for the department. It received its authority from passage of Referendum 45 by both the Legislature and the public in 1995. The commission has a variety of duties, including: 1) the establishment of hunting and fishing seasons, 2) prescribing the time, place, and manner of game fish and wildlife harvest, 3) establishment of provisions regulating food fish and shellfish, 4) adoption of rules to implement the state's fish and wildlife laws, 5) and final authority over the department's budget proposals and any tribal, interstate, or international fish and wildlife agreements.

In 1986 the department organized six administrative regions, each with a regional supervisor, to implement programs in enforcement, habitat, and wildlife and fisheries management. The administrative regions are organized geographically, with three in western Washington and three in eastern Washington. These administrative regions are subject to change by the department. Currently, the administrative regions are arranged as displayed in Attachment 1.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Six of the nine members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission shall be appointed to represent the six administrative regions of the Department of Fish and Wildlife as the regions existed on January 1, 2001. Each of the six members must represent a different administrative region. The department must formally adopt the six regions by rule and the Governor is required to achieve this balance by administrative region as the terms of current commissioners expire and vacancies occur. The other three members of the commission may reside in any region of the state.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The original bill did not specify that the commissioners are to be appointed from the administrative regions as they existed on January 1, 2001.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: Not all portions of the state receive representation on the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Southwest Washington has been without representation for some time. Each region should have a commissioner who is familiar with the issues of that region. The proposed distribution is fair and equitable. Power over fish and wildlife

should be dispersed through the state.

(Neutral) Not all portions of the state receive representation on the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Southwest Washington has been without representation for some time. Each region should have a commissioner who is familiar with the issues of that region. The proposed distribution is fair and equitable. Power over fish and wildlife should be dispersed through the state.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Pennington, prime sponsor; Dawn Reynolds, Fish and Wildlife Commission; Tom Gibbons, Western Washington Wildlife Council; and Jim Zimmerman, Washington Cattlemen's Association and Washington State Granges.

(Neutral) Russ Cahill, Fish and Wildlife Commission; and Hertha Lund, Washington Farm Bureau.