

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6110

As Reported by House Committee On:

Natural Resources
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to the Puget Sound crab pot buoy tag program.

Brief Description: Providing for the administration of a Puget Sound crab pot buoy tag program.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines (originally sponsored by Senators Spanel, Gardner and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 3/23/01, 3/26/01 [DPA];
Appropriations: 3/29/01, 3/31/01 [DPA(NR)].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- The Department of Fish and Wildlife is authorized to charge a fee to people who hold Dungeness Crab - Puget Sound Fishery licenses to reimburse the department for producing Puget Sound crab pot buoy tags and the administration of a Puget Sound crab pot buoy program.
- A Puget Sound crab pot buoy tag account is created.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Doumit, Democratic Co-Chair; Sump, Republican Co-Chair; Pearson, Republican Vice Chair; Rockefeller, Democratic Vice Chair; Buck, G. Chandler, Edwards, Eickmeyer, Ericksen, Jackley, Murray and Pennington.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

The Puget Sound crab pot fishery is a limited entry fishery with a 100 pot limit. All Puget Sound crab pots are required to be tagged, but no uniform system exists for the production, distribution, and monitoring of buoy tags. A uniform system of crab pot buoy tags could help distinguish crab pots between treaty shellfish fishers, recreational fishers, and the Puget Sound crab pot commercial fishers. Highly visible tags would also aid in the enforcement of the 100 pot limit.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife has proposed to buy the buoy tags and supply them to the crab fishing fleet, but the department does not have the authority to charge each crab fisher for the tags.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is authorized to charge a fee to people who hold Dungeness Crab - Puget Sound fishery pot licenses to reimburse the department for producing Puget Sound crab pot buoy tags and the administration of a Puget Sound crab pot buoy program.

A Puget Sound crab pot buoy tag account is created in the State Treasurer's custody. All proceeds from the fees charged to licensees are deposited into the account, and expenditures may only be made upon authorization of the director or the director's designee. The account is subject to allotment reductions but no appropriation is necessary to make expenditures.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

Language is added to clarify that only people who hold Puget Sound fishery licenses for Dungeness crab are charged the fees and not processors of the crab.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: This will make it easier to enforce the 100 pot limit. People who abuse the limit affect the catch rate and the season closes before it would otherwise. The industry supports this because it levels the playing field. Recreational fishers are not affected.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Spanel, sponsor; Phil Anderson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Steve Kuchin and Randy Richardson Puget Sound Crab Association.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Natural Resources. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Sehlin, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Barlean, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Lisk, Republican Vice Chair; Alexander, Benson, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Cox, Dunshee, Fromhold, Grant, Kagi, Keiser, Kenney, Kessler, Lambert, Linville, Mastin, McIntire, Mulliken, Pearson, Pflug, Ruderman, D. Schmidt, Schual-Berke and Talcott.

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: Available.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: None.