

Natural Resources

HB 1655

Brief Description: *Appointing a fish and wildlife advisory committee composed of disabled persons.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Sump, Doumit, Pearson, Rockefeller and Clements.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Authorizes a four-year pilot program creating an advisory committee for the Fish and Wildlife Commission composed of disabled hunters and fishers.*

Hearing Date: *2/7/01*

Staff: *Jason Callahan (786-7117).*

Background:

The Fish and Wildlife Commission (the Commission) serves as the supervising authority for the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Commission 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 WDFW's budget proposals and any tribal, interstate, or international fish and wildlife agreements.

The Commission provides some opportunities for persons with disabilities. These programs include the issuance of a disabled hunter permit and the establishment of Persons with Disabilities Hunts.

Summary of Bill:

The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) must appoint five persons with a disability, two from the eastern portion of Washington, two from the western portion of

Washington, and one from anywhere in the state, to an advisory committee. The advisory committee generally represents the interests of disabled hunters and fishers on matters such as special hunts, modified sporting equipment, access to public land, and hunting and fishing opportunities.

The advisory committee meets twice a year at minimum and is composed of volunteers serving four-year terms. All official advisory committee meetings are staffed by two persons provided by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The members of the advisory committee are reimbursed for travel expenses and provided with a per diem.

The advisory committee is a pilot program expiring on July 1, 2005. By December 1, 2004, the Commission will present a report to the legislature detailing the effectiveness of the advisory committee, including information on participation levels, general interest, quality of advice, and recommendations for the advisory committee's continuance or modification.

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

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not Requested.*