
Natural Resources Committee

HB 2368

Brief Description: Creating the legislative fish and wildlife committee.

Sponsors: Representatives Buck, Hatfield, Schoesler, Sump, DeBolt, Pearson, Roach, McMorris, Boldt, Mielke, Mulliken, Holmquist, Ahern, Morell and Grant.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a Legislative Fish and Wildlife Committee consisting of 12 members.
- Transfers all powers, duties, and functions of the State Fish and Wildlife Commission to the Legislative Fish and Wildlife Committee.
- Creates a fish and wildlife citizen advisory council consisting of nine members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

Hearing Date: 2/13/02

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

The Fish and Wildlife Commission consists of nine members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Three of the members must be residents of Eastern Washington, three of the members must be residents of Western Washington, and three members are appointed at-large. No two members may be residents of the same county.

Persons appointed to the commission must have general knowledge of the habits and distribution of fish and wildlife, and may not hold any other elected or appointed office. In making the appointments to the advisory council, the Governor must seek to maintain a balance reflecting all aspects of fish and wildlife, including representatives of sportfishers, commercial fishers, hunters, private landowners, and environmentalists.

The commission appoints the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The director serves at the pleasure of the commission. Other duties of the commission include establishing policies to preserve, protect, and perpetuate wildlife and fish and wildlife and fish habitat; and to maximize fishing, hunting, and outdoor recreational opportunities

compatible with healthy and diverse fish and wildlife policies.

Summary of Bill:

All powers, duties, and functions of the State Fish and Wildlife Commission are transferred to the Legislative Fish and Wildlife Committee. All assets and pending business of the commission are transferred to the legislative committee. All existing contracts and obligations remain in effect and are to be performed by the legislative committee.

A 12-member Legislative Fish and Wildlife Committee is created. Six members of the House of Representatives are appointed by the Speaker of the House, and six members of the Senate are appointed by the President of the Senate. No more than three members of the House and no more than three members of the Senate may be appointed from the same political party. The legislators must be confirmed by their respective chambers. The committee must adopt rules and procedures for its orderly operation.

The Legislative Fish and Wildlife Committee is directed to: adopt rules and establish direction for implementing legislative policy for fish and wildlife species; monitor the department's implementation of the goals, policies, and objectives established by the committee; classify wildlife and adopt rules governing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife; handle all general administrative and personnel duties related to the committee; determine the number of committee staff needed to fulfill committee duties; establish policies for committee staff; adopt an interim work plan and meeting schedule; and approve all contracts signed on behalf of the committee.

A fish and wildlife citizen advisory council is created consisting of nine members appointed by the Governor. Persons appointed to the advisory council must have general knowledge of the habits and distribution of fish and wildlife, and may not hold any other elected or appointed office. The members of the advisory council are subject to confirmation by the Senate.

In making the appointments to the advisory council, the Governor must seek to maintain a balance reflecting all aspects of fish and wildlife, including representatives of sportfishers, commercial fishers, hunters, private landowners, and environmentalists. Three of the members must be from Eastern Washington and three members must be from Western Washington. The remaining three members are appointed at-large. No two members may be from the same county. Members of the advisory council serve four-year terms. The terms of the initial members are staggered.

The advisory council is directed to study and analyze all available facts and matters relating to: wildlife, fish, and shellfish in the state, including the protection, management, and conservation of these resources in a manner that does not impair them; the department's mandate to maintain the economic well-being and stability of the state's fishing industry; the department's actions to promote orderly fisheries in the state, and to enhance and improve recreational and commercial fishing; the taking of wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish in the state as authorized by the legislative committee; the committee's efforts to maximize public recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities for all citizens; the department's work with volunteer groups and individuals; and bills assigned to the House and

Senate natural resources committees.

The advisory council is directed to study and analyze all available facts and matters relating to revenue sources, appropriations, expenditures, and the financial condition of the state wildlife fund, and all other funds or accounts related to state fish and wildlife programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on June 30, 2002.