
Natural Resources Committee

SSB 6313

Brief Description: Providing for the retrieval of derelict fishing gear.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines (originally sponsored by Senator Oke).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to work with various groups to develop guidelines for the safe removal of derelict fishing gear and to maintain a database of the location of known derelict gear.
- Encourages anybody that loses gear to report the loss to the Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Exempts derelict gear removal from the hydraulic permit requirements.

Hearing Date: 2/20/02

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

Derelict gear is the term used for fishing nets, traps, or lines that are lost or abandoned in state waters. Some derelict gear may continue to catch fish and other marine organisms after it is lost. There is currently no incentive to report the loss of gear, and no common procedures for gear removal.

The Northwest Straits Commission (commission), which was authorized by an act of Congress in 1998, received a federal grant to develop protocols for the safe removal of derelict gear, and to inventory and remove derelict gear in the Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan De Fuca. The commission is composed of various state, tribal, and local government representatives.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (department) must work with the Northwest Straits Commission and the Department of Natural Resources to publish guidelines for the safe removal and disposal of derelict fishing gear by August 31, 2002 and maintain a database of the location and type of known derelict gear. The removal of any gear in accordance with the guidelines does not require a hydraulic project permit from the department.

Any person who loses or abandons commercial fishing gear is encouraged to report the location and type of the loss to the department within 48 hours.

The department must consult with fishing industry groups and tribal co-managers to evaluate methods to reduce future losses of fishing gear and report the results to the Legislature by January 1, 2003.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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