

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1655

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines, March 26, 2001

Title: An act relating to the creation of an advisory committee to the fish and wildlife commission composed of disabled individuals.

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

Sponsors: By House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Sump, Doumit, Pearson, Rockefeller and Clements).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines: 3/21/01, 3/26/01 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; Constantine, Hargrove, Morton, Oke, Snyder and Stevens.

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

Background: The Fish and Wildlife Commission serves as the supervising authority for the Washington 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 department'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 Amended Bill: The commission must appoint seven persons with a disability, one from each of the department's administrative regions, 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 the

department. 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.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The department must provide an unspecified level of staffing to the official advisory committee meetings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The Fish and Wildlife Commission needs more input from disabled hunters and fishers in order to provide more opportunities to the disabled sporting public.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Russ Cahill, Fish and Wildlife Commission Chair.