

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2431

As Reported by House Committee On:
Fisheries, Ecology & Parks

Title: An act relating to Dungeness crab endorsement.

Brief Description: Establishing a Dungeness crab endorsement.

Sponsors: Representatives Upthegrove, Cooper and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Fisheries, Ecology & Parks: 1/29/04, 2/6/04 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires a catch record card endorsed for Dungeness Crab for Puget Sound recreational fishers to take or possess Dungeness crab.
- Dungeness crab endorsements may not exceed \$3, and funds from the endorsement may only be used for monitoring and management of Dungeness crab recreational fisheries.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Cooper, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Hinkle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buck, Hatfield, O'Brien, Pearson and D. Simpson.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

A personal use saltwater, freshwater, combination, or temporary license is required for all persons 15 years of age or older to fish for or possess fish or shellfish taken for personal use from state or offshore waters. Temporary fishing licenses are issued either as a license document requiring personal identification or as a stamp. Charter boats may sell temporary fishing license stamps to customers which are valid for two consecutive

days.

In addition to a recreational license, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) currently requires fishers to report their harvest activity on catch record cards for salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, halibut, and Dungeness crab. Initial catch record cards are provided free with the purchase of a license, and additional or duplicate catch record cards cost \$10 each. Catch estimates generated by the catch record card system are used by the WDFW to manage fisheries. However, since a catch record card contains a variety of species, WDFW is unable to sample only Dungeness crab recreational fishers.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A catch record card endorsed for Dungeness crab is required for Puget Sound recreational fishers to take or possess Dungeness crab. Dungeness crab endorsements may not exceed \$3, and funds from the endorsement may only be used for sampling, monitoring and management of Dungeness crab recreational fisheries. Catch record cards issued with affixed temporary charter stamps are not subject to the Dungeness crab endorsement fee.

The Department must evaluate the effectiveness of the Dungeness crab endorsement as a method for improving the accuracy of the catch estimate for Puget Sound Dungeness crab recreational fisheries and report their findings to the Legislature by May 15, 2006.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill restricts the requirement for Dungeness crab endorsements to Puget Sound waters. The substitute bill directs the Department to use moneys from Dungeness crab endorsements for additional crab management activities and not to supplant existing funds. The substitute bill also directs the Department to report on the effectiveness of the endorsement for improving the accuracy of the catch.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on December 1, 2004.

Testimony For: The Department uses phone surveys to develop mid-season estimates, and must survey all catch record cards. This bill would reduce the sample size and increase the accuracy of the harvest. The lack of accuracy has been a frustration to both commercial and recreational harvesters. There were significant losses to commercial harvesters from recreational over-harvesting, resulting in lost jobs and income. Funds

from the endorsement will be dedicated to managing the resource.

The current catch record system is flawed. Perhaps a lower number of crabs should be allowed per catch record card to further improve information. Commercial fishers and tribal fishers must report all of their harvest. Every crab counts, so we should count every crab.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Gary Hulse, East Jefferson Puget Sound Angler; Morris Barker, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Clint Muns, Puget Sound Anglers; Corey Freeman, NSIA/REA/Trout Unlimited; Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries; and John Rantz and Karen Thompson, Puget Sound Crab Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.