
**Fisheries, Ecology & Parks
Committee**

HB 1887

Brief Description: Creating the commercial fisheries permit buyback account.

Sponsors: Representatives Linville, Sump, Cooper, Buck and Hatfield.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Commission to establish a fee on three fisheries, with all revenue generated directed to be used for reimbursing the federal government for a fleet reduction permit buyback program.
- Creates the unappropriated Commercial Fisheries Permit Buyback Account.

Hearing Date: 2/25/03

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) manages most commercial fisheries in Washington and issues commercial fishing licenses. Many fisheries are closed fisheries, meaning that the number of licenses issued for that fishery is capped at a set number. These fisheries include the coastal Dungeness crab fishery (RCW 77.70.280) and the ocean pink shrimp fishery (RCW 77.70.230).

Occasionally, the federal government undertakes efforts to reduce the number of commercial fishers operating in certain fisheries by purchasing individual fishing licenses. This year the United States Congress has decided to do this for the Dungeness crab and pink shrimp fisheries in Washington, Oregon, and California. Interested fishers will have the opportunity to offer a bid to have their licenses purchased by the federal government. The buyback program is funded with a thirty-year loan that is designed to be repaid by the remaining fishers in the fleet.

Summary of Bill:

If the federal government creates a fleet reduction groundfish permit buyback program, the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) is authorized to collect a fee from commercial fishers holding an ocean pink shrimp license, a coastal Dungeness crab, or a salmon trolling license. The Commission may establish the fee amount through administrative rule, and all fees collected must be used to reimburse the federal government for the permit buyback program. The set fee may not be more than is necessary for federal reimbursement, but may be proportionally applied to the eligible fisheries to match the benefits received by the fisheries under the federal program.

The unappropriated Commercial Fisheries Permit Buyback Account (Account) is created to hold any fees until they are distributed to the federal government. The Account, and the fee established by the Commission, expire January 1, 2006. Any funds remaining in the account on that day is transferred to the general fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.