

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1887

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Parks, Fish & Wildlife, March 31, 2003

Title: An act relating to commercial fisheries.

Brief Description: Creating the commercial fisheries permit buyback account.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Linville, Sump, Cooper, Buck and Hatfield).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Parks, Fish & Wildlife: 3/24/03, 3/31/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PARKS, FISH & WILDLIFE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Sheahan, Vice Chair; Doumit, Esser, Jacobsen, Morton and Swecker.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: The Department of Fish and Wildlife life is charged with managing the state's commercial fisheries, and issues commercial fishing licenses. Certain fisheries are limited entry, with a limit on the number of licenses that may be issued, both to reduce harvest capacity and to maintain an economically viable fishery.

Both the ocean pink shrimp and coastal Dungeness crab are limited entry fisheries. To qualify for a license, a fisher must have maintained certain historic harvest levels. Once issued, a license may be transferred to another fisher. If the coastal Dungeness crab fishery drops below 175 licenses, the Fish and Wildlife Commission may issue new licenses up to 175.

Last fall the Pacific Fisheries Management Council significantly restricted the catch of groundfish along the west coast. In response, the U.S. Congress authorized a license buy-back for Pacific groundfish permits, and approved funding to be repaid over a 30-year period. To prevent a shift in fishing capacity from groundfish to other coastal species, any fishers selling their federal Pacific groundfish permits must also surrender any coastal Dungeness crab or ocean pink shrimp licenses.

The federal groundfish fleet reduction program assumes the federal loan will be repaid by the remaining participants in each of the fisheries.

Summary of Bill: The Fish and Wildlife Commission must collect a fee on all deliveries of fish or shellfish by holders of groundfish, ocean pink shrimp, or coastal Dungeness crab licenses. The fees are deposited in the commercial fisheries license buyback account, and

must be used to repay the loan from the federal government for the groundfish fleet reduction program. The fee may not be assessed until after the federal government creates a groundfish fleet reduction program, and expires in 2033 or when the fleet reduction program is completed.

Fees charged to the holders of a coastal Dungeness crab license may not exceed 2 percent of the total value of annual landings. Fees charged to any other eligible license holder may not exceed 5 percent of the total value of annual landings.

A person participating in the federal groundfish fleet reduction program may not be issued a coastal Dungeness crab license within ten years, if similar restrictions are put in place by Oregon and California. The requirement to maintain a maximum of 175 coastal Dungeness crab licenses and the ability of the commission to issue new coastal Dungeness crab licenses are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This is supported by the Washington commercial fishing industry. It is a new approach to reducing fishing capacity, in that all costs are born by the commercial fishing industry and no state funding is required.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Representative Linville, prime sponsor; Phil Anderson, WDFW; Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries.