

5179-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Parks, Fish & Wildlife (originally sponsored by Senators Oke, Mulliken, Rasmussen and T. Sheldon)

Brief Description: Allowing the use of body-gripping traps in certain circumstances.

SB 5179-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS PASSED LEGISLATURE)

Finds that a professionally managed and regulated trapping program is not only vital to the health of Washington's wildlife populations, but is also consistent with the state's obligations to manage all natural resources in trust for the common good of all citizens.

Finds that it is in the interest of all of the citizens of Washington to ensure that all trapping is done in accordance with sound scientific wildlife management principles using humane methods as set forth in this act. It is the legislature's intent to reinstate a sound furbearer management program, administered using sound science by the department of fish and wildlife, that addresses mammal population dynamics and animal damage issues.

Finds that humanely regulated trapping practices contribute positively to the economic well-being of the state of Washington, to public health and welfare by assisting to control the spread of animal-borne disease, and to the protection of private and public property from damage resulting from uncontrolled animal populations.

Finds that the sale, trade, or barter of wild animal pelts is consistent with the legislature's intent not to waste a valuable wildlife resource.

Directs the commission to adopt appropriate rules regarding the types of traps and bait for use in capturing wildlife to ensure the humane treatment of captured animals. In adopting these rules, the commission may take into consideration the effectiveness of various trap sizes, approved best management practices, and the habitats in which the traps may be used. These rules must address the time intervals during which specific traps must be checked and animals removed. These rules may not allow for the use of traps with teeth or serrated edges or a neck or body snare attached to a spring pole or any spring pole type device. The commission must also adopt rules for the appropriate disposal of carcasses.

Directs the department to institute a furbearer management program that addresses animal problems and shall only issue programmatic trapping, conditional use, or restricted use trapping permits, as those terms are defined in RCW 77.08.010, and trapping licenses or propose rules consistent with this program.

Repeals RCW 77.15.192.

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5179-S

May 20, 2003

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, Substitute Senate Bill No. 5179 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to body-gripping traps;"

This bill would have provided that a trapping program is in the state's interest and that the sale of pelts is consistent with the Legislature's intent not to waste a wildlife resource. It would have allowed, if permitted by the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), use of a body-gripping trap to address animal problems and fur-bearer management needs.

Early this session, I supported legislation that would have addressed the specific problems associated with Initiative 713. This legislation would have allowed the use of traps on moles, gophers and mountain beavers, and provided additional protections for livestock. At that time, I also indicated my opposition to legislation that would repeal the core principles underlying the initiative. Whenever possible, improvements to address unintended consequences of an initiative should be pursued before consideration of a repeal. Because this bill effectively repeals the initiative, even though an alternative legislative solution exists to address the problems of the initiative, I have vetoed the bill in its entirety.

We need to put this issue behind us by looking for ways we can creatively implement solutions, rather than perpetuate problems. With this message, I am requesting members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission to closely oversee DFW's implementation of Initiative 713, consistent with its spirit and intent. Specifically, I would like the Commission to recommend changes to help protect livestock and reduce damage to public property, and to conduct an educational outreach program around the state that explains the availability of the special permit program allowed under Initiative 713. In the meantime, I also would expect that given current financial constraints, DFW would use its limited enforcement resources on higher priorities rather than against homeowners, businesses and the timber industry that have trapped for moles, gophers and mountain beavers. I would like the Commission Chair to provide me with a report in person by December 1, 2003.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5179 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor