

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6161

As Reported by House Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks

Title: An act relating to group fishing permits for outdoor education programs working with the department of fish and wildlife.

Brief Description: Concerning group fishing permits.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senator Oke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 2/16/06 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes the Department of Fish and Wildlife to issue group fishing permits to groups participating in outdoor education programs.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Buck, Ranking Minority Member; Kretz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Chandler, Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Hunt, Kagi and Orcutt.

Staff: Amy Van Horn (786-7168).

Background:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) conducts many special youth fishing events, mostly in April, May, and June. In partnership with a number of outdoor recreation organizations, the Department operates a "Go Play Outside" program to encourage outdoor activities and education. Partners in "Go Play Outside" include the Puget Sound Anglers, the Association of Washington School Principals, and the Washington Wildlife Coalition. "Go Play Outside" includes a youth fishing initiative.

Fishing licenses are not required for people who are 14 or younger. Fifteen-year-olds must have a youth license to fish, and anyone 16 or older must have a standard license. The Department offers fishing licenses for fishing in saltwater, freshwater, or both. Most fishing licenses are annual; however, temporary two-day licenses may be purchased by individuals or families.

The Department must issue seasonal, group fishing permits to state-operated or state-licensed nonprofit facilities or programs for citizens who are disabled, seriously ill, terminally ill, or senior citizens. The Commissioner of the Department is required to adopt rules for issuing group fishing permits.

Summary of Bill:

The Department may set conditions and issue a group fishing permit to groups working in partnership with and participating in Department-sponsored outdoor education programs. The Director may apply a processing fee to such licenses.

The Director is no longer required to adopt rules that set conditions under which group fishing permits are issued, but may set such rules at his or her discretion.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Schools and the Department run many programs to get young people outside and teach them to understand, appreciate, and care for the environment. Some of them become environmental stewards and lifelong fishers who will buy many fishing licenses in the future. Currently, some teenagers have to sit out during their group's fishing trips because they cannot afford an individual fishing license. The Department has gotten 65,000 young people out fishing, many of whom catch their first fish in the Department program, and the Department would like to get teenagers over 14 out there fishing too. The recreational fishing community supports the bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Oke, prime sponsor; Corey Freeman, Recreational Fishing Alliance; Clint Muns, Puget Sound Anglers; Mike Hanson, Tyler Pierce, and Raelynd Tarnove, Tahoma School District; Terry Rudnick, Department of Fish and Wildlife; and John Aultman, New Market Skills Center.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.