

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6401

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

Title: An act relating to charter licenses.

Brief Description: Modifying definitions of charter licenses.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Doumit, Jacobsen, Schoesler, Regala, Morton and Honeyford).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 2/21/06 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes that charter boats include all vessels that charge a fee to fish, whether or not any fish are caught, or whether they are caught and then released.
- Clarifies that charter licenses are required on Lake Washington and in the area of the Columbia River below the Longview Bridge.
- Clarifies that Oregon charter vessels need a Washington charter license if they take on passengers in Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Buck, Ranking Minority Member; Kretz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Chandler, Dickerson, Hunt, Kagi and Orcutt.

Staff: Amy Van Horn (786-7168).

Background:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) requires charter fishing boats to obtain an annual license. A salmon charter license currently costs \$380 for residents and \$685 for non-residents. A non-salmon charter license, required for all food fish and shellfish besides salmon, costs \$225 for residents and \$375 for non-residents. The charter license is required in all saltwater areas of the state, in Lake Washington, and in the area of the Columbia River

below the Longview Bridge. A charter license is not required in any other lakes or other freshwater areas such as rivers and streams.

A licensed Oregon charter boat may operate in the coast off Washington up to Leadbetter Point without a Washington charter license, provided it does not land at any Washington port with the purpose of taking on or discharging passengers.

Summary of Bill:

Redefining Charter Vessels

A charter boat is defined as a boat from which persons may fish for a fee. Previously, a charter license was required only for the "taking" of fish, which excluded both (1) boats hired out for catch-and-release fishing, and (2) unsuccessful fishing trips.

Clarifying Language on Freshwater Areas

A provision is reworded to make clear that a charter license is required in only two freshwater areas of the state: Lake Washington and the area of the Columbia River below the Longview Bridge.

Clarifying Language on Oregon Charter Boats

The provision governing Oregon charter boats is reworded to make clear that an Oregon charter boat may not take on or discharge passengers for any purpose from the Washington shore, whether the passengers get on at a port or any other point of departure.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill does not change where charter licenses are required, but rather just clarifies the language in the statute to make it easier to understand and to enforce. The charter fishing industry supports the bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Ed Owens, Ilwaco and Westpoint Charter Boat Fleets, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries; and Captain Mike Cenci, Department of Fish and Wildlife Enforcement.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.