

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6439

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

Title: An act relating to coastal crab fisheries licenses.

Brief Description: Concerning coastal crab fisheries licenses.

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 2/17/06, 2/21/06 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Restricts Dungeness crab coastal fishery license holders to one vessel designation change for certain larger vessels, rather than one change in any five consecutive seasons.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. 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: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

The Fish and Wildlife Commission has the authority to adopt rules for commercial fisheries, including specifying the gear and equipment that may be used to take fish and shellfish. A Dungeness crab coastal fishery license is required to commercially fish for coastal Dungeness crab in Washington waters.

The Legislature created a limited entry Dungeness crab coastal fishery license that became effective on January 1, 1995. As part of the limitation program, there are certain length restrictions on vessels designated for use under a license. A license holder may not change designation to a vessel whose hull length exceeds 99 feet.

Also, a license holder may not change designation to a vessel that exceeds the length of the currently designated vessel by more than 10 feet. Additionally, a license holder may generally change designation to a vessel between one and 10 feet longer than the currently designated vessel no more than once in any five consecutive coastal crab seasons. In determining vessel hull length, a person may use United States Coast Guard documentation, a marine survey, or manufacturer's specifications.

Summary of Amended Bill:

A Dungeness crab coastal fishery license holder may request that the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) change designation to a vessel between one and 10 feet longer than the designated vessel no more than once, rather than once in any five consecutive coastal crab seasons. If a holder of a Dungeness crab coastal fishery license makes an emergency transfer, the applicable vessel designation would be the most recent permanent vessel designation on the license prior to the effective date of this section. Vessel hull length means the length overall of a vessel's hull as shown by marine survey or manufacturer's specifications, and not by United States Coast Guard documentation.

The DFW, in cooperation with the coastal crab fishing industry, must evaluate the effectiveness of the hull restrictions and recommend any changes to the Legislature by December 31, 2010.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The striking amendment provides that if a holder of a Dungeness crab coastal fishery license makes an emergency transfer, the applicable vessel designation would be the most recent permanent vessel designation on the license prior to the effective date of this section.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 2006.

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

Testimony For: (In support of amendment) The bill addresses the increasing lengths of vessels in the Dungeness crab coastal fishery, which increases the pressure on the resource. The restrictions will limit harvest capacity over time, and the amendment allows the DFW to deal with emergency transfers that may occur.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support of amendment) Phil Anderson, Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.