

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2962

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**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:** Representatives Blake, Buck and Takko.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 1/31/06, 2/2/06 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- 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.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill 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:** 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 crab in Washington waters.

The Legislature created a limited entry coastal crab fishing 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 U.S. Coast Guard documentation, a marine survey, or manufacturer's specifications.

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**Summary of Substitute 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. Vessel hull length means the length overall of a vessel's hull as shown by marine survey or manufacturer's specifications, and not by U.S. 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.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill adds a requirement that the DFW, in cooperation with the coastal crab fishing industry, evaluate the effectiveness of the hull restrictions and recommend any changes to the Legislature by December 31, 2010. Vessel hull length means the length overall of a vessel's hull as shown by marine survey or manufacturer's specifications.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** (In support of original bill) Although there are currently provisions limiting vessel size for commercial coastal crab fishers, the limits have not kept the industry's capacity from increasing a great deal. Dungeness crab license holders may use vessels up to 99 feet long. Larger vessels have more fishing opportunity and can fish in more extreme weather conditions. By restricting vessel length, the license restriction would be more effective at limiting the capacity of the fishery. The coastal crab fishers support self-limiting the size of vessels because of the flexibility provided in this bill.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support of original bill) Representative Blake, prime sponsor; Morris Barker, Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.