

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5216

As of May 09, 2006

Title: An act relating to gray wolf management.

Brief Description: Prohibiting the introduction of the gray wolf into Washington.

Sponsors: Senators Morton, Hewitt, Benson, Stevens, Mulliken, Sheldon, Roach and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/3/05.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: Gray wolves are listed as threatened by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. They are listed in 47 states, which is throughout all of their range in the United States. In Washington, gray wolves have been sighted in the Ross Lake National Recreation Area and in the north Cascades. Also, there is an area where gray wolves have been sighted in the Selkirk mountains in northeast Washington. At the present time there are no documented gray wolf packs in the state.

Summary of Bill: The Fish and Wildlife Commission must protect gray wolves and develop management programs on publicly owned lands that will encourage the natural regeneration of gray wolves in areas with suitable habitat. Gray wolves may not be transplanted, augmented, or introduced into the state. Only gray wolves that are native to Washington may be utilized by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for management programs. The department is directed to fully participate in all discussions and negotiations with federal and state agencies relating to the management of gray wolves.

A person releasing a gray wolf within Washington State or near the state international borders must implant each gray wolf to be released with a microchip containing specific information for that particular gray wolf. The person must also obtain and transmit to the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife a DNA sample from each gray wolf to be released, along with documentation providing information concerning the date of release and place of release.

A severability clause is included.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: None.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Whether or not wolves are directly introduced into Washington, they will be coming in from other states. So, it is essential to gather information and to be prepared for their presence in the state.

Testimony Against: This bill tries to solve a problem that does not exist because there are no plans to reintroduce wolves into Washington.

Who Testified: PRO: George Kirkmire, Washington Contract Loggers Association; Ed Owens, Hunters Heritage Council; Jack Field, Washington Cattleman's Association.

CON: Seth Cool, Northwest Ecosystem Alliance; Steve Robinson, NWIFC.