

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5869

As Passed Senate, March 16, 2005

Title: An act relating to fish planting.

Brief Description: Concerning planting of certain trout.

Sponsors: Senators Swecker, Jacobsen, Oke, Spanel, Hargrove, Morton, Doumit, Stevens and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/21/05, 2/24/05 [DP].
Passed Senate: 3/16/05, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Oke, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Morton, Spanel and Swecker.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: The 1999 Legislature declared that it would be beneficial to improve opportunities for trout fishing to satisfy public demand for recreational fishing opportunities. Fish farmers can produce triploid trout that will not interbreed with wild trout. The triploid trout can be planted into public lakes and ponds to increase recreational fishing opportunities, thus boosting tourism and the economy.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has the authority to purchase privately produced fish to supplement existing trout hatchery production. The planting of the fish purchased must not have an adverse impact on the wild trout population. The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) was given the authority to determine which water bodies were appropriate for this use during 1999 and 2000. In making this determination, the Commission was to seek to provide opportunities to fishers statewide. The Commission was also to determine the maximum number of fish that may be planted in state waters to avoid competition between triploid trout and wild populations.

The Department was only authorized to purchase privately produced fish where the cost of the program would be recovered by estimated increases in revenues for license sales and from federal funds directly attributable to the planting of these privately produced fish.

Summary of Bill: The Commission's authority to determine which waters are appropriate for the planting of triploid trout is no longer limited to the years 1999 and 2000. Additionally, the provision allowing the Department to purchase privately produced fish only where the cost of the program would be recovered by estimated increases in revenues for license sales and from federal funds is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This bill would allow the continuation of a very popular program that increases recreational fishing opportunities and brings tourists to the state. This bill would also remove an audit requirement that is difficult for the Department to meet.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Morris Barker, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Jim Zimmerman, Washington Fish Growers Association.