
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1075

Brief Description: Authorizing department of fish and wildlife employees to partake in certain inspections and samplings.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake, Takko and Moeller.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increasing the ability of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to inspect, collect, and observe fish, wildlife and shellfish.
- Expanding the gross misdemeanor of "interfering in department operations" to include preventing or interfering with the inspection and collection of fish, wildlife and shellfish and the boarding of recreational and commercial vessels.

Hearing Date: 1/15/07

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

Background:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is mandated to preserve, protect, perpetuate and manage fish, shellfish, and wildlife in state waters and offshore waters [RCW 77.04.012]. As part of this mandate, the DFW is authorized to regulate many aspects of fishing, harvesting and hunting, including the size, sex, species and quantities taken, the transportation, sale and disposal, determination of the gear that may be used, classification of species, and reporting requirements [RCW 77.12.047].

In order to carry out these duties, the DFW has the authority to inspect fish, wildlife, shellfish and seaweed at check stations for requirements such as licenses, permits, tags, stamps or catch record cards [RCW 77.12.620].

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Enforcement officers of the DFW have the authority to stop and inspect a person or boat without a warrant, at a reasonable time and in a reasonable manner, in order to check for violations of the DFW rules or statutes [RCW 77.15.096].

Summary of Bill:

In order to carry out the duties of the DFW, employees are given express authority to inspect all fish, wildlife and shellfish, inspect where they are commercially stored, collect samples, and board commercial vessels in order to inspect and observe harvest practices.

If a person prevents or interferes with the inspection or collection of fish, wildlife and shellfish or prevents or interferes with the boarding of recreational or commercial vessels they are guilty of interfering in department operations. Unlawful interfering in department operations is a gross misdemeanor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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