

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5015

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 1, 2007

Title: An act relating to designating the state ornithologist.

Brief Description: Designating the state ornithologist.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Poulsen and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/25/07, 2/07/07 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5015 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: Ornithologists are scientists who specialize in the study of birds. Ornithologist studies include how birds live in their environment, changes in bird populations, how birds are changing in today's environment, and how ecological changes may affect them in the future. Ornithologists document the role of birds in the control of insects and seek protections for birds.

Some states, such as Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Tennessee have state ornithologists. These state ornithologists serve in an advisory role on policy development and implementation, interpretation, and coordination of federal and state laws. They assist the director of their respective agencies in areas relating to conservation, research, monitoring and management of non-game birds.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): The Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) appoints the Washington State Ornithologist while considering recommendation of candidates from private and public avian research institutions.

The State Ornithologist serves at the pleasure of the Director and without compensation. The director may reimburse travel and per diem costs. The State Ornithologist serves as a source of expertise to the DFW and other agencies regarding bird research and conservation. The

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State Ornithologist also assists the Governor, state agencies, and the Legislature with designing bird conservation programs and policies.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY NATURAL RESOURCES OCEAN & RECREATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Allows the Director to reimburse travel and per diem costs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The state ornithologist would be a resource through extension services to the public as well as to agencies and could provide technical services too. However, the Department of Fish and Wildlife should be able to pay travel and per diem expenses.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Steve Pozzanghera, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Heath Packard, Audubon Society.