

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6234

As of January 12, 2010

Title: An act relating to fishery license limitation programs.

Brief Description: Regarding the sea urchin and sea cucumber license limitation programs.

Sponsors: Senators Swecker and Hargrove; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/11/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Role of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). DFW serves as manager of the State's fish and wildlife resources. Among other duties, DFW must classify wildlife and establish the basic rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife.

Sea Urchin and Sea Cucumber Dive Fishery Licenses. The sea urchin or sea cucumber dive fisheries (the dive fisheries) are separate commercial fisheries, and each requires a license issued by DFW. Each of the dive fisheries is a limited entry fishery, and only those who held a dive fishery license prior to December 31, 1999, may renew a license. DFW may not issue a new license in a dive fishery until fewer than 25 persons are eligible to renew a license in that fishery. However, a renewable dive fishery license is transferrable.

Sea Urchin and Sea Cucumber Dive Fishery Buyback Programs. DFW administers a statutory, industry-funded license buyback program for each of the dive fisheries. The buyback programs are currently authorized through 2010. Funding for each of the buyback programs comes from the following sources:

- a surcharge of \$100 on a dive fishery license renewal;
- a surcharge of varying amounts, either \$500 or \$2500, for designating an alternate operator on a dive fishery license;
- a surcharge of varying amounts, either \$500 or \$2500, to transfer a dive fishery license; and
- a portion of the enhanced food fish tax on commercial sea urchins and sea cucumbers landings.

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.

Summary of Bill: The statutory license buyback program for the sea urchin and sea cucumber dive fisheries is extended. The buyback programs now operate:

- through license year 2013; or
- until the number of licenses in a dive fishery is reduced to 20, whichever comes first.

DFW may not issue a new license in a dive fishery until fewer than 20 persons are eligible to renew a license in that fishery, which is reduced from the current threshold of 25 persons.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 7, 2010.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

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 participants in these fisheries support the bill. They support the buyback program, which is essentially a tax on themselves, in order to retire licenses in the fisheries. The industry wants to continue the program.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Dan Morris, Young Ocean Life; Craig Burley, DFW.