

SHB 2349 - S COMM AMD

By Committee on Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters

ADOPTED 02/29/2012

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that beavers have
4 historically played a significant role in maintaining the health of
5 watersheds in the Pacific Northwest and act as key agents in riparian
6 ecology. The live trapping and relocating of beavers has long been
7 recognized as a beneficial wildlife management practice, and has been
8 successfully utilized to restore and maintain stream ecosystems for
9 over fifty years. The benefits of active beaver populations include
10 reduced stream sedimentation, stream temperature moderation, higher
11 dissolved oxygen levels, overall improved water quality, increased
12 natural water storage capabilities within watersheds, and reduced
13 stream velocities. These benefits improve and create habitat for many
14 other species, including endangered salmon, river otters, sandhill
15 cranes, trumpeter swans, and other riparian and aquatic species.
16 Relocating beavers into their historic habitat provides a natural
17 mechanism for improving the environmental conditions in Washington's
18 riparian ecosystems without having to resort to governmental regulation
19 or expensive publicly funded engineering projects.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 77.32 RCW
21 to read as follows:

22 (1) The department shall permit the release of wild beavers on
23 public and private lands with agreement from the property owner.

24 (2) The department may limit the release of wild beavers to areas
25 of the state where:

26 (a) There is a low probability of released beavers becoming a
27 nuisance or causing damage;

28 (b) Conditions exist for released beavers to improve, maintain, or
29 manage stream or riparian ecosystem functions; and

1 (c) There is evidence of historic endemic beaver populations.

2 (3) The department may condition the release of beaver to maximize
3 the relocation's success and minimize risk. Factors that the
4 department may condition include:

5 (a) Stream gradient;

6 (b) Sufficiency of the water supply;

7 (c) Stream geomorphology;

8 (d) Adequacy of a food source;

9 (e) Proper site elevation and valley width;

10 (f) Age of the beavers relocated;

11 (g) Times of year for capture and relocation;

12 (h) Requirements for the capture, handling, and transport of the
13 live beavers;

14 (i) Minimum and maximum numbers of beavers that can be relocated in
15 one area; and

16 (j) Requirements for the permit holder to initially provide
17 supplemental food and lodge building materials.

18 (4) The department may require specific training for those involved
19 with capture, handling, and release of beavers.

20 (5) Nothing in this section creates any liability against the state
21 or those releasing beavers nor authorizes any private right of action
22 for any damages subsequently caused by beavers released pursuant to
23 this section.

24 (6) For the purposes of this section, "beaver" means the American
25 beaver (*Castor canadensis*).

26 (7) For the purposes of this section, beavers may only be released
27 to carry out relocation: (a) Between two areas east of the crest of
28 the Cascade mountains; or (b) from an area west of the crest of the
29 Cascade mountains to an area east of the crest of the Cascade
30 mountains.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 77.36 RCW
32 to read as follows:

33 (1) Whenever the department receives a request for relocating
34 beaver, the department must inform the requesting party of locations,
35 if available, of surplus beaver available for capture and relocation.
36 The department may identify nuisance beaver or areas with thriving

1 beaver populations as a source population for capturing and relocating
2 beaver.

3 (2) The department shall post on the agency's web site quarterly
4 reports of nuisance beaver activity, beaver trapping, and beaver
5 relocations reported to the department.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The department of fish and wildlife must
7 initiate a beaver management stakeholder's forum by January 1, 2013,
8 and report the outcomes of the forum to the legislature consistent with
9 RCW 43.01.036.

10 (2) This section expires July 31, 2014."

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11 On page 1, line 1 of the title, after "beavers;" strike the
12 remainder of the title and insert "adding a new section to chapter
13 77.32 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 77.36 RCW; creating new
14 sections; and providing an expiration date."

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